

***THREE THINGS: Fourth line produces two big goals in win
The Jets beat the Sabres 4-1 and now have points in three of their last four (2-1-1).***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – Cole Koepke had a goal and an assist to help the Winnipeg Jets to a 4-1 win over the Buffalo Sabres at Canada Life Centre. Kyle Connor, Tanner Pearson and Gabe Vilardi also scored for the Jets (14-12-1) who now have points in three of their last four games (2-1-1). Connor also had an assist recording his 615th and 616th career points and surpassed Ilya Kovalchuk (615) for the third most points in franchise history. Eric Comrie made 34 saves for Winnipeg who will face the Oilers in Edmonton on Saturday night.

MUCH BETTER START

The last time the Jets faced the Sabres on Monday, Buffalo jumped out to a 2-0 lead by the 3:01 mark of the first period on route to a 5-1 win. Friday night, Winnipeg made sure that they got off to a better start and Kyle Connor got them the first goal of the night.

Eric Comrie was pulled after the first period in Buffalo and since then, the Jets goaltender has stopped 63 of the last 66 shots he has faced.

FANTASTIC FOUR-TH LINE

After getting just one goal from someone besides Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Gabriel Vilardi over the previous eight games, the Jets got a couple in the second period from the fourth line. With the game tied 1-1, Cole Koepke stole the puck from Owen Power at the Jet blueline and sent Tanner Pearson in on a breakaway, Pearson beat Luukkonen for his fourth of the season at 2:22.

Koepke would get his first as a Jet at 18:42, taking a pass from Morgan Barron and sliding the puck under Luukkonen to give Winnipeg their first two goal lead of the night.

“When your fourth line can do that and score you two goals that’s a big game changer. Especially in the second period of a tight game. We did a good job of not trying to open it up, and when those guys get an opportunity like that, a breakaway, 2-on-1 or 2-on-0, whatever it was, that’s big for our group,” said Scott Arniel.

“I don’t know if you saw our bench? Our bench was pretty excited about it as well. It just takes a little bit of heat off everyone.”

LINE BLENDER

Scott Arniel chose to keep the same lines from the game in Montreal on Wednesday to start the game against the Sabres. The Jets were outshot 15-8 in the opening period and Arniel chose to go to the line blender to open the second for his second and third lines.

Toews-Lowry-Perfetti
Niederreiter-Namestnikov-Iafallo

Arniel used Lowry for defensive zone faceoffs and Toews took the offensive zone draws and he put that trio together to counter something that the Sabres were doing. The Jets coach also was happy with Niederreiter, Namestnikov and Lafallo.

"It was just something that there was a little bit of history with Nino, Vladdy and Al. It was just trying to get one, a matchup I was trying to get against the opposition," said Arniel.

"But trying to get some people going. I thought there was some chemistry built, some offensive zone time that helped out a little bit."

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-montreal-canadiens-game-recap-december-3-2025>

Connor extends goal streak to 4, Jets defeat Sabres Forward also has assist, Comrie makes 34 saves for Winnipeg; Buffalo has lost 4 of 6

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Kyle Connor extended his goal streak to four games and also had an assist for the Winnipeg Jets in a 4-1 win against the Buffalo Sabres at Canada Life Centre on Friday.

"As a group, our details and our compete, some of the things that maybe I've talked about in the past that weren't up to speed, I thought tonight as a whole we did a better job," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "As much as you saw their speed, I thought we did a really good job of getting numbers back whenever possible. I just thought it was a solid game where we forced them to play in their end a lot more, certainly more than we did down in Buffalo and we were rewarded for it."

Cole Koepke and Gabriel Vilardi each had a goal and an assist for the Jets (14-12-1), who have points in three of four (2-1-1). Eric Comrie made 34 saves.

"He's a fantastic goalie," Koepke said. "And (he) showed it again tonight. He continues to lead us from the back end again."

Jason Zucker scored for the Sabres (11-13-4), who won 5-1 against the Jets in Buffalo on Monday. They have lost four of six (2-4-0), including the first two games of a six-game road trip. Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen made 19 saves.

"I thought we deferred to some cute plays tonight, especially, even late in the third period," Buffalo coach Lindy Ruff said. "We're right in the slot and we passed off some plays. But we handed them two goals at the same time. I mean, we gave them a 2-on-0. We gave them a penalty shot. They didn't give us those opportunities."

Connor made it 1-0 Jets at 4:24 of the first period, scoring on his own rebound in the slot by sliding the puck under Luukkonen.

"I think there were some really good examples of that where we got zone time, and not just [Connor's] line," Arniel said. "The other lines were doing a good job with it (too)."

Zucker's power-play goal tied it 1-1 at 14:44, jamming in a rebound in front from a Josh Norris one-timer. It was his third power-play goal in as many games.

"We're not here for moral victories," Zucker said. "We didn't do enough. We didn't do enough to win. We've got to be better.

"When you're not feeling it on offense, you've got to work harder. You've got to get around the net, you've got to get pucks there. You've got to be willing to go to the dirty areas and be willing to just fight for one to go off your [back side], go off something, get it in the net. And I don't think we have enough of that."

Tanner Pearson scored on a breakaway to put the Jets ahead 2-1 at 2:22 of the second after he and Koepke created a turnover near the blue line in Winnipeg's defensive zone.

"It was a lot of skating. Coming back, good coverage kind of led to the turnover," Pearson said. "[Koepke] is in a good spot to force it from going east to west and made a good pickoff play there."

Sabres forward Alex Tuch said: "It's a whole different game if I don't turn that puck over on the blue line. So, I put a lot of this game on myself and I needed to be better. I just can't allow things like that. I can't have stuff like that creeping into my game, and I know better. Yeah, that just can't happen."

Luukkonen kept it 2-1 when he stopped Adam Lowry on a penalty shot at 10:18 of the second period.

Koepke extended it to 3-1 at 18:42. He settled Morgan Barron's cross-ice pass and went forehand-backhand around Luukkonen's left pad.

"That's a fantastic pass and a high-end play," Koepke said. "That's just the kind of plays that Barron can make. I'm lucky to play with him."

It was Koepke's first goal of the season and first as a member of the Jets.

"It's huge for us," Koepke said of the two goals his line with Barron and Pearson produced. "We haven't quite had a game like that for us this year. We've been just really working at it and have just been trying to continue to build our game. It was great for us as a line, and the team was rolling as well, so it's even better when it comes in a win."

Scheifele appeared to score for Winnipeg at 13:24 of the third period when he banked in a rebound short side off Luukkonen after Neal Pionk's point shot deflected off the end boards. Buffalo challenged for offside, however, and the goal was overturned after video review.

"[Our top players] do have to produce," Ruff said. "You know, it might be just time to shake up, (a) big shakeup of the lines and try to get something going."

Vilardi scored into an empty net at 19:26 for the 4-1 final.

"We knew that they were going to come out and be physical and try to play with a lot more energy than they did last game against us," Tuch said. "But I thought we had a lot of

possession, I thought we had a lot of good opportunities, but we just needed to make it harder on their goalie and harder on the defensemen.”

NOTES: Connor recorded his sixth career goal streak of at least four games to tie Scheifele for the second most in franchise history, behind only Ilya Kovalchuk (17 times). ... Zucker scored a power-play goal in his third straight game. Only three other Sabres players have a run of that length in the past 15 years: Rasmus Dahlin (three games in 2024-25), Tage Thompson (three in 2022-23) and Victor Olofsson (three in 2019-20). ... Connor recorded his 615th and 616th career points, passing Ilya Kovalchuk (615) for the third-most points in Jets/Atlanta Thrashers history.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/05/fourth-line-comes-through>

Fourth line comes through

Pearson, Koepke bulge the twine, Comrie solid between pipes as Jets dump Sabres to end slump

By: Ken Wiebe

Scott Arniel had a feeling the dam was going to break, even if it took longer than he imagined it would.

The head coach of the Winnipeg Jets watched three of his four lines dip into an offensive funk the likes of which hadn't been seen in these parts for quite some time.

After sorting his way through various permutations and combinations, Arniel decided to keep old faithful together, banking on them staying hot and the secondary scoring finally arriving from an alternative source.

Well, right on cue, Kyle Connor opened the scoring and then the Jets got a pair of fourth-line goals — from Cole Koepke and Tanner Pearson — to break a tie game and earn a 4-1 victory over the Buffalo Sabres on Friday night before a crowd of 13,682 at Canada Life Centre.

“When your fourth line can do that and score you two goals that’s a big game changer,” said Arniel, whose team improved to 14-12-1. “Especially in the second period of a tight game. We did a good job of not trying to open it up, and when those guys get an opportunity like that, a breakaway, 2-on-1 or 2-on-0, whatever it was, that’s big for our group.

“I don’t know if you saw our bench? Our bench was pretty excited about it as well. It just takes a little bit of heat off everyone.”

The Jets are back in action on Saturday in Edmonton against the Oilers before returning home to open a four-game homestand.

Koepke confessed it was impossible not to think about the importance of getting offence from players who were struggling to find the scoresheet.

“I’m sure that everyone is feeling the pressure,” said Koepke. “We’re not necessarily trying to think about it. But especially for us, as our line, we’re just trying to go out there, play as a group

of three, wear the other team down, make sure we're sound in our own end and create offence that way.

"Doing that worked really well for us. Both of our goals came from pressure and started in our own zone. That's what we can continue to build on."

Let's take a closer look at this one:

FOURTH LINE ERUPTION

The fourth line that struck not once – but twice – during the second period to give the Jets some valuable breathing room.

The first goal was created by a turnover forced by Koepke at the defensive blue line.

Koepke stole the puck and sent Pearson in alone on a breakaway, with Pearson scoring to the glove side.

Koepke also made it 3-1 by going to the backhand for his first goal of the season after accepting a pass in the slot from Morgan Barron.

Pearson had one goal (and point) during his previous 20 games, so his marker came with a side order of relief.

As for Koepke, he had been limited to two assists through his first 17 games since joining the Jets, so you could see the weight that was lifted off his shoulders as well.

"Well he has such tremendous speed," Arniel said of Koepke. "That's something when I talked to him about (it), it's (about) putting his speed on display as much as possible. And you're going to get the chances. He has had some looks, he has had some opportunities. I know he was squeezing his stick like a lot of guys, but at the end of the day it was great to see him get his first."

COMRIE SHINES

Four days after being pulled after giving up three goals on 14 shots in the first period of a 5-1 loss to the Sabres, goalie Eric Comrie delivered his second brilliant performance of the week.

Comrie was one of the biggest reasons the Jets came away with a point in Wednesday's 3-2 shootout loss to the Montreal Canadiens and he was even better on Friday, stopping 34 of 35 shots against his former team to improve his record to 6-5-1 in what was his 12th start of the season.

There were a number of quality saves made by Comrie in this one, including a sneaky good pad stop on Sabres forward Tage Thompson during the third period.

"I don't know if there is a bad day in (Comrie's) world. It's such a positive attitude and it goes such a long way," said Pearson. "He's not quiet in the room, that's for sure, amongst the guys. He's got a great attitude and (played) a heckuva couple of games here. We're just trying to help him out."

The lone goal scored by the Sabres came on the power play from Jason Zucker.

By turning aside 63 of 66 shots over the last two games, Comrie has seen a sharp rise in his save percentage (up to .905), while his goals-against average is down to 2.82.

THE JUGGLE

There's been plenty of speculation and debate about what Arniel might do with his line combinations of late.

After mulling over the potential to break up the top line in an effort to look for more balance, Arniel kept his line blending to the second and third units, flip-flopping captain Adam Lowry and Vladislav Namestnikov.

Lowry centred a line with Jonathan Toews (though he took several offensive zone draws) and Cole Perfetti, while Namestnikov moved back to the middle between Nino Niederreiter and Alex Iafallo.

The offensive output didn't immediately follow for them, but Lowry earned his first career penalty shot midway through the second period when he was hooked by Sabres captain Rasmus Dahlin.

Lowry tried to shoot a wrist shot through the five-hole, but he was stopped by Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen.

KEY PLAY: Jets winger Cole Koepke forced Alex Tuch to turn over the puck at the defensive blue and sent in Tanner Pearson on a breakaway for the game-winning goal.

THREE STARS

Cole Kopeke, Jets, Scored a goal and set up another.

Eric Comrie, Jets, Finished with 34 saves, several of the highlight-reel variety.

Tanner Pearson, Jets, Scored the game-winner.

TOP LINE DELIVERS AGAIN

Make it two more goals for the Jets top trio.

Connor opened the scoring by finishing off a play set up by Gabe Vilardi 4:24 into the contest.

The goal by Connor was his 15th goal of the season and finished off a stretch that included 12 goals scored out of the 15 produced by the Jets team during that span.

Connor then returned the favour and set up Vilardi for the empty-net goal in the final minute of regulation time.

Vilardi is up to 11 goals, while centre Mark Scheifele has 14 and nearly had another — but it was wiped out by a coach's challenge for offside.

"It's hard when that line can score like that," Arniel said after the morning skate. "You hope they can go out and do what they do and outscore the opposition. Whether that's 1-0, 2-1, 3-1, and then hope the other guys chip in. The one thing about that line, they're usually always on the plus side of chances and goals."

When skating together at even strength through 27 games, the Scheifele line has outscored opponents 26-17 so far this season.

EXTRA, EXTRA

Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck is two weeks into his recovery process and is progressing nicely.

"He's got movement going. He hasn't touched the ice yet," said Arniel. "It's getting close, though. Sort of his up, down stuff is starting to happen. It's progressing as we'd hope."

Arniel also said Jets defenceman Haydn Fleury has been removed from concussion protocol and is back on the ice. The next step in the process for Fleury is to get his conditioning up.

The Jets healthy scratches were defencemen Luke Schenn and Colin Miller and forward Gustav Nyquist.

Souris product Tyson Kozak missed both Sabres games against the Jets this week with an injury. He has two goals and four points in 19 games while averaging 12:24 of ice time per game.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hard-hats-to-the-rescue-as-jets-sweep-aside-buffalo-sabres>

Hard hats to the rescue as Jets sweep aside Buffalo Sabres

By Gordon Anderson

The fourth line to the rescue.

Tanner Pearson and Cole Koepke scored second-period goals to pace the Jets to a 4-1 win over the Buffalo Sabres on Friday night.

"When your fourth line can do that and score you two goals, that's a big game changer," head coach Scott Arniel said. "Especially in the second period of a tight game."

Pearson's go-ahead goal came on a two-man breakaway with Koepke at 2:22 of the second period, the opportunity created when Pearson forced an Alex Tuch turnover at the Jets blue line, Koepke picking up the puck and sending Pearson in alone.

Pearson's shot went glove side on Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen for his fourth of the season. Koepke earned the only assist. Luukkonen stopped 19 shots for the Sabres.

"I knew there was a good chance he was behind me," Pearson said. "He said afterwards that he probably picked the guy to give me more time. Thankfully, it did."

"I did not tell him I was with him," Koepke said. "I didn't want to mess with him. I just tried to get a bit of a skate screen and just give him some extra time and let him do his thing."

Koepke had a two-point game. Pearson and Morgan Barron had one point each.

Koepke scored his first goal as a Jet when he redirected a Barron pass into the net at 18:42 of the second. The assist was Barron's first point in 10 games.

"That's a fantastic pass and a high-end play," Koepke said. "That's just the kind of plays Barron can make. I'm lucky to play with him."

Barron had a chance to score his first goal in 17 games on a two-on-one in the final stanza, but Luukkonen was equal to the task. Luukkonen stopped 19 shots for the Sabres.

The win was restitution for Monday's 5-1 loss in Buffalo.

Gabe Vilardi scored into the empty net at 19:26 of the third period.

The Jets are 10-1-0 when leading after two. The Sabres dropped to 2-10-1 when trailing after 40 minutes.

Kyle Connor also scored for the Jets. Mark Scheifele had his 15th goal of the season wiped out for offside in the third period. The Jets improved to 7-5-0 at home. The win snaps a two-game home losing streak.

Eric Comrie turned aside 34 shots for the win.

Jason Zucker scored for the Sabres. The Sabres have the fewest road wins in the league at two in a dozen games, the team at 2-8-2.

The Jets are in Edmonton to face the Oilers on Saturday night.
Ice Chips

Luke Schenn, Gustav Nyquist, and Colin Miller were scratched.

Splitting them up

With good reason, Arniel has zero plans to split up Vilardi, Connor and Scheifele at the moment, but he experimented with a second line of Jonathan Toews between Adam Lowry and Cole Perfetti.

Arniel put the line together to start the second. The trio created an odd-man chance early in the third when Toews found Perfetti alone in the slot, but the shot was blocked on the way to the net.

Lowry had a chance to snap his now 14-game goal-scoring drought at 9:42 of the second period when he was awarded a penalty shot. Luukkonen made the save. Jonathan Toews has gone 11 games without a goal. He has one helper in 10 games. Perfetti has two goals in 13 games.

'Movement going'

After the Friday morning skate Ariel said netminder Connor Hellebuyck is progressing after arthroscopic knee surgery last month. The Jets never specified which knee received the procedure.

"He's into movements," Arniel said. "He's got movement going. He hasn't touched the ice yet. It's getting close, though. His up and down stuff is starting to happen. It's progressing as we'd hope."

The club moved Hellebuyck to the IR list on Nov. 24. The original diagnosis was four to six weeks. Hellebuyck previous start was against the Calgary Flames, a 4-3 shootout win on Nov. 15.

With Eric Comrie and Thomas Milic manning the crease, the Jets are 3-5-1 in nearly three weeks of action.

Cleared to skate

After spending about three weeks on concussion protocol, Haydn Fleury is back on the ice. He skated on Friday morning prior to the team's game-day skate.

"He's cleared," Arniel said. "Now, it's about conditioning. He wasn't skating for a stretch there. Friday was his first real go. He won't make the road trip to Edmonton."

The Jets defender was injured in a game in Vancouver on Nov. 11. The Jets placed Fleury on injured reserve two days later.

<https://winnipegstar.com/sports/jets-players-want-dustin-byfuglien-at-the-heritage-classic>

Jets players want Dustin Byfuglien at the Heritage Classic

By Paul Friesen

It's a no-brainer for those who played in the first one a decade ago and likely a no-brainer for fans who'll attend next year.

The alumni component of the NHL's Heritage Classic outdoor game in Winnipeg next Oct 25, has to include one man, above all others: Retired defenceman Dustin Byfuglien.

"If he has his phone on and we can get a hold of him, for sure," Josh Morrissey said on Thursday. "He's a legend."

Morrissey was partnered with Byfuglien in the first Heritage Classic at Winnipeg back in 2016. At least, for as long as he could keep up.

While the 21-year Morrissey, a rookie at the time, clocked in a respectable 18 minutes of ice time, Byfuglien, 10 years older, was out for 30-plus minutes.

Playing outdoors with 33,000 in the stands, it's like the big guy didn't want to come off.

"That might just be the outdoor ice and the cool air — you glide a little bit better," Morrissey said, laughing. "Or it's just the excitement of it all, who knows."

Kyle Connor, also playing in that game as a rookie, bets it was the latter.

"It was probably one of those games where he was just feeling it," Connor said. "In his element, outside of the normal routine of an NHL player. And he thrives in that element. He's never been a stereotypical defenceman. He's one of a kind. That game probably just brought it out of him. He was probably just going at another level."

Byfuglien's popularity in Manitoba was at another level, too.

Enticing him back for the event would add a rock-star element only he could bring.

“A larger-than-life type of personality and player,” is how Connor put it. “He’s probably the most loved player in this city. Probably second to none. The character he had, the personality, just the way he played the game. So it would be awesome to have him in that ... and catch up to him and share stories.”

Byfuglien came to Winnipeg as one of the Atlanta Thrashers and played eight seasons with the Jets. He abruptly retired after the 2018-19 campaign, walking away from the two years and \$14 million left on his contract. That he never had a proper sendoff is one reason Morrissey would like to see him return next fall.

“Listen, the people of Winnipeg love him,” Morrissey said. “Some of the 1000th-game presentations we’ve had in recent years where he’s been up there giving a little video tribute, I mean the building explodes every time they see him.

“He deserves, and the fans as well, an opportunity to say thank-you to him, and for him to embrace the fans for what was a really special relationship there for a long time.”

The Heritage Classic includes an alumni game. Next year’s could fill the stadium if No. 33 is part of it.

Even if he hasn’t put on a pair of skates in six years and isn’t in tip-top shape.

“That’s all right,” Connor said, laughing. “He can cruise around and get away with it.”

“I’ve seen him skate with his skates untied,” Morrissey added. “And it didn’t look any different. He was a special talent.”

Paired with Byfuglien for only part of his first season, Morrissey recalls his partner’s reaction when the duo got scored on a couple of times early on.

“He was like, ‘Well, welcome to the NHL. First of many,’ kind of thing. His perspective on that and just his love of the game, love to just play, was so great for me as a young guy.”

As laid-back as Byfuglien usually was, his physical presence gave his fresh-faced partner some extra room.

Morrissey recalls delivering a good hit and sparking a scrum in a game that rookie season.

“And then Buff came in and the scrum dissipated pretty quickly.”

Reaching Byfuglien won’t be as quick. He never was very attached to his cell phone, preferring to get away from it all in a fishing boat.

“I sure hope we can get a hold of him and he wants to come back,” Morrissey said. “It would be special.”

Canadian Press

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/12/05/winnipeg-jets-buffalo-sabres-game-win-recap/>

Winnipeg Jets Top Buffalo Sabres 4-1; Comrie Makes 34 Saves

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

Jets head coach Scott Arniel got the secondary scoring he was looking for from unlikely sources Friday.

Depth forwards Cole Koepke and Tanner Pearson each had a goal in Winnipeg's 4-1 victory over the Buffalo Sabres.

"When your fourth line can do that and score you two goals, that's a big game-changer, especially in the second period of a tight game," Arniel said. "We did a good job of not trying to open it up, and when those guys get an opportunity like that, a breakaway, 2-on-1 or 2-on-0, whatever it was, that's big for our group.

"I don't know if you saw our bench? Our bench was pretty excited about it as well. It just takes a little bit of heat off everyone."

Top-liner Kyle Connor scored his team-leading 15th goal of the season and linemate Gabriel Vilardi added an empty-netter. Eric Comrie made 34 saves.

Winnipeg (14-12-1) had only registered goals from forwards other than Connor, Vilardi and Mark Scheifele in one of its previous seven games.

"It's huge for us," Koepke said of his line's contribution. "We haven't quite had a game like that for us this year. We've been just really working at it, and have just been trying to continue to build our game. It was great for us as a line, and the team was rolling as well, so it's even better when it comes in a win."

Koepke was a free-agent signing during the summer and has one goal and three assists through 18 games.

Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen stopped 19 shots for Buffalo (11-13-4), which was playing the second contest of a season-long six-game road trip.

After Connor scored 4:24 into the game, Jason Zucker tied it up with five minutes left in the first.

Pearson scored the go-ahead goal at 2:22 of the second on a breakaway after a pass from Koepke, then Koepke used a backhand to bury his goal with 1:18 left in the period.

"I knew there was a good chance (Koepke) was behind me," Pearson said. "He said afterwards that he probably picked the guy to give me more time. Thankfully, it did."

Pearson was also a free-agent add and has two goals and four assists in 25 games.

The Jets headed straight to the plane after the victory for a flight to Edmonton for Saturday's tilt against the Oilers.

While Winnipeg is 2-5-1 in its past eight games, the club is also trending upward and is 2-1-1 in its last four.

The players redeemed themselves after a 5-1 loss to the Sabres on Monday in Buffalo — a blowout that sparked a players-only meeting following the team's fifth loss in six outings.

"I thought tonight as a whole we did a better job," Arniel said. "As much as you saw their speed, I thought we did a really good job of getting numbers back whenever possible.

"It was a solid game where we forced them to play in their end a lot more, certainly more than we did down in Buffalo and we were rewarded for it."

WORLD CUP FEVER

Switzerland native and Jets forward Nino Niederreiter will be cheering for two teams at the same time when the World Cup rolls around next year.

Canada's draw was announced Friday, with the 27th-ranked squad facing off against No. 17 Switzerland, No. 51 Qatar and the winner of a European playoff in March.

The Canadians take on Switzerland in Vancouver on June 24.

"I know the national team coach of Switzerland very well," Niederreiter said of Murat Yakin. "He's a pretty good friend of mine, so it's exciting. When I saw the draw and they play against Canada, it's kind of cool to see. (Canada) is a home away from home for me so it's great to cheer both on.

"But at the same time, I'm definitely hoping the Swiss are going to go far."

Niederreiter's father-in-law knows Yakin and that's how they met. They even play golf in the summer.

Niederreiter, 33, has represented Switzerland numerous times, including at the 2014 Sochi Olympics and nine world championships. He's already been selected to the roster for the 2026 Olympics in Italy.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11564519/first-fourth-lines-each-score-twice-as-winnipeg-jets-down-sabres-4-1/>

1st & 4th lines each score twice as Winnipeg Jets down Sabres 4-1

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

Fans have been begging the Winnipeg Jets' depth players to start contributing on the scoreboard, and Friday night at Canada Life Centre, they finally did.

Yes, the top line stayed hot, but a pair of fourth line goals helped as well as the Jets dumped the Buffalo Sabres 4-1 to avenge an embarrassing loss from only four days earlier.

A return to home ice is just what the doctor ordered as the Jets picked up a much-needed win after losing six of their previous seven games.

“As a group, our details and our compete, some of things maybe I’ve talked about in the past that weren’t up to speed, I thought tonight as a whole we did a better job,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “As much as you saw their speed, I thought that we did a really good job of having numbers, getting numbers back whenever possible. I just thought it was a good solid game where we forced them to play in their end a lot more, certainly than we did down in Buffalo, and we got rewarded for it.”

In their last six losses, the Jets didn’t have a forward from outside their top line score a single goal, but the fourth line made a huge contribution against the Sabres with Tanner Pearson and Cole Koepke both scoring in the victory.

“That was huge for us,” said Koepke who scored his first goal with the Jets. “We haven’t quite had a game like that yet this year, but we’ve been really working at it and just trying to continue to build our game. And it was great for us as a line and then the team was rolling as well, so it’s even better when it comes in a win.”

Kyle Connor scored his 299th career goal to open the scoring, giving him goals in four straight games. Mark Scheifele assisted on Gabriel Vilardi’s empty netter to give him a six-game point-streak.

The Jets took a 3-1 lead into the third period and didn’t give up many quality chances in the final frame as they picked up just their second win in the last eight games.

As has been customary in recent vintage, the Jets were slow to get going out of the gates, with Eric Comrie being forced to turn aside six shots in the first three minutes before his side could muster a shot.

That proved to be critical because, at the 4:24 mark, Winnipeg’s top line struck again.

A Dylan Samberg point shot was stopped and the rebound wound up in the corner where Scheifele retrieved it. Scheifele sent it back to the point where Samberg passed it down low to Vilardi, who one-touched a pass in front to Connor. His initial shot was stopped but he slid the rebound through the five-hole of Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen for his 15th of the season.

Winnipeg held the lead until the 14:44 mark when Buffalo took advantage of their second power play look of the period.

Josh Norris took the initial shot on net, and it did not get all the way through, but the puck sat right in front of the crease for Jason Zucker. He was robbed by Comrie on his first attempt before he whacked the puck into the net to level the score.

The Jets came up empty on their lone power play look late in the period as they finished the first with eight shots on goal to Buffalo’s 15.

Winnipeg finally got a contribution on the scoreboard from their depth as Pearson put them ahead early in the second. Alex Tuch turned the puck over at the Jets’ blueline, allowing Koepke to spring Pearson on a long breakaway. He skated in and whipped a shot past Luukkonen for his fourth of the season at the 2:22 mark.

It was just the fourth time in eight games that someone other than Scheifele, Vilardi or Connor scored for Winnipeg.

Logan Stanley nearly extended the Jets' lead when he jumped up in the rush, but he managed to put it off the post with the net open.

Buffalo then had a long sequence in the Winnipeg end where Rasmus Dahlin hit the post.

Moments later, Adam Lowry escaped the Jets' zone with the puck and was destined for his own breakaway before Dahlin blatantly hooked him in the neutral zone, earning the Jets' captain a penalty shot.

With the crowd on their feet, Lowry skated in on Luukkonen and fired it right into the goalie's pads as he attempted to go five-hole.

The close calls continued a short time later when Josh Morrissey rang a shot off the crossbar from fairly close range before Buffalo had a couple decent looks where Comrie was scrambling in his crease, but the Sabres couldn't bury it.

Late in the period, Winnipeg finally converted a chance to make it 3-1, and it came from an unlikely source.

After a stretch of play in the Jets' end of the ice, Dylan DeMelo sent a long pass up the ice to Morgan Barron as the Sabres went for a line change. Barron took it into the Buffalo zone before sending the puck to a streaking Koepke, who made a move on Luukkonen before depositing a backhand into the net for his first in 18 games as a Jet with 1:18 left in the second.

Very little happened over the first half of the third, with each team managing just one shot on goal.

Winnipeg's top line appeared to put the game on ice with 6:36 remaining. A point shot from Neal Pionk went well wide and ricocheted off the end boards, right to the stick of Scheifele on the other side of the net. He banked it in off the skate of Luukkonen, but after a challenge by Buffalo, the goal was called back because Scheifele had been offside by a whisker 21 seconds before the goal was scored.

The Sabres were not able to take advantage before Vilardi scored into an empty net with 33.8 seconds remaining.

Comrie was rock solid in net for the second game in a row, stopping 34 shots.

The Jets will now head to Edmonton for a Saturday night showdown with the Oilers. Thomas Milic will get the start when the puck drops just after 9 p.m. with pregame coverage on 680 CJOB beginning at 7 p.m.