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BLOG: Morrissey and Hellebuyck focused on process

Morrissey: "The focus is having a great training camp and getting off to a great start"

By Mitchell Clinton

WINNIPEG – Before the Winnipeg Jets Golf Classic presented by Canada Life even began, Josh Morrissey was already a winner.

The 30-year-old defenceman edged out long-time friend and teammate – and fellow Team Canada Olympic Orientation invitee – Mark Scheifele in the putting contest held the night before the event.

"It was a true underdog story. It was the stuff of legend," Morrissey said sarcastically on Monday. "My wallet took a beating this summer on the course, until my putting finally showed when it mattered most. Scheifele went for a few hole in one opportunities and kind of handed it to me, it was fun."

This year's tournament was a scramble format which saw players paired up with members of the community for a breezy challenge at St. Charles Country Club.

"(I'm) a way better fisherman. Way better. I put way more time in on the water," laughed Connor Hellebuyck, who arrived in Winnipeg a couple days ago after being the team's representative at the National Hockey League's Player Media Tour in Las Vegas.

"Catching up with everyone is nice," said Hellebuyck. "This allows me to see everyone in the same area. Not only that, I get to talk to some interesting people that really look forward to this tournament. So, it kind of goes back to how close this community gets - and things like this help that."

Fresh off winning his first Hart Trophy – the first goaltender to do so since Carey Price in 2015, and just the fourth overall since 1967-68 – Hellebuyck's mind is on what's ahead with training camp officially starting with physicals on Wednesday.

"I'm going to wipe all expectations of what happened last year and go in with an open mind and continue to build my game the way I want to build it," said Hellebuyck, who also added his third Vezina Trophy and second William Jennings Trophy to his resume in 2024-25.

HellebuyckGT

No matter how the prior season ended, every team starts back at square one when the regular season begins. While many of the faces in the Winnipeg room are the same as the group that produced the club's first Presidents' Trophy, there are new faces.

Gustav Nyquist, Tanner Pearson, Cole Koepke, and – of course- local product Jonathan Toews are all looking to help the Jets take the next step as a group.

"I think we might have more depth than ever in this organization," said Morrissey. "There's really just a sense of excitement. Everybody looks good. It's a fun time of year. Keep trying to take those next steps as a group. That's the ultimate goal here as we get started."

Team success is paramount for these athletes, but there is also an excitement about returning to the Olympics in February. The last time NHLers participated was back in 2014, when Morrissey was watching – now teammate – Toews and Canada bring home the gold.

The opportunity to add the word 'Olympian' to his resume is one that excites Morrissey, especially after his experience at the 4 Nations Face-Off last season.

"I think right now the focus is having a great training camp and getting off to a great start as a team and individually, but ultimately, for sure, it's a huge goal of mine to play on that team and have a chance to represent Canada at the Olympics," he said. "2010, 2014, even back to 02, kind of remember where I was when some of those moments occurred. Hope to have that chance. The camp this summer was great to re-connect with guys from Four Nations and get to know a couple guys I maybe didn't know so well also."

So just like professional golfers take each individual swing as it comes and focus on their process, the same can be said for professional hockey players. It may be enticing to think a number of months down the road, but the process is critical and the journey is, perhaps, even more important.

And that's where experience comes in.

"My path from now until getting in-season ready is just laid out ahead of me. I know exactly what I need to do and how to get there," said Hellebuyck. "Just the stress on the mind, that's what the experience kind of takes away. I'm less stressed now and I'm very focused and motivated for what I've already done before. So I've just got to continue to fall back into that line and keep putting my best foot forward, really."

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Getting into the swing of things

Hellebuyck, Morrissey tee up season as Jets vets tee off at annual charity tourney

By: Mike McIntyre

Connor Hellebuyck admits his golf game is nowhere near trophy-winning form. When it comes to leisurely pursuits, the decorated Winnipeg Jets goaltender is much more comfortable with a fishing rod in his hands than a driver or putter.

“Way better. I put way more time in on the water,” he told the Free Press with a laugh.

Still, the NHL’s reigning MVP — and well-known master angler — was happy to spend a few hours away from the rink on Monday at St. Charles Country Club, teeing it up with teammates and local hockey fans as part of the Jets’ annual charity tournament.

“I just got in (to Winnipeg) a couple of days ago, so catching up with everyone is nice. This allows me to see everyone in the same area,” Hellebuyck said before hitting the course for the scramble.

“It kind of goes back to how close this community gets. Things like this help that.”

The 32-year-old Michigan native will soon be back in his element as training camp officially opens later this week, ushering in a fresh wave of expectations for both him and his team.

“I’m excited. We’ve got some new faces and some guys that are ready to build on what we did last year,” said Hellebuyck. “I’m really looking forward to the future here. Really, one day at a time.”

Hellebuyck is coming off a career year in which he captured a third Vezina Trophy and, for the first time, the Hart Trophy. He also claimed a second straight William Jennings Trophy as the Jets once again surrendered the fewest goals in the NHL over 82 regular-season games.

Winnipeg also hoisted the Central Division, Western Conference and Presidents’ Trophy banners for the first time in franchise history before bowing out in the second round of the playoffs to the Dallas Stars.

How might Hellebuyck and company follow all of that up?

“At this point, I’m not overthinking anything. I know the stuff that I want to work on and I’m not in any rush to get there,” said Hellebuyck, who is starting the second year of a seven-year contract extension he signed in 2023.

“I’m going to wipe all expectations of what happened last year and go in with an open mind and continue to build my game the way I want to build it.”

“You put one piece together at a time and you put your best foot forward every single day and you continue to build something magical. I’m going to wipe all expectations of what happened last year and go in with an open mind and continue to build my game the way I want to build it.”

A Stanley Cup remains the ultimate goal, and Hellebuyck’s playoff struggles have been well-documented. Not far behind is Olympic gold, which he’ll get the chance to chase in February when the NHL returns to the Winter Games for the first time since 2014.

Hellebuyck, who is as cerebral as they come, is ready for the challenge.

“I know exactly what I need to do and how to get there. Just the stress on the mind, that’s what the experience kind of takes away,” he said.

“I’m less stressed now and I’m very focused and motivated for what I’ve already done before. So I’ve just got to continue to fall back into that line and keep putting my best foot forward, really.”

As for the state of the Jets, Hellebuyck is excited to see what new additions such as Jonathan Toews can bring to the organization.

“I haven’t seen him skate yet, so I’m really looking forward to our first on-ice session together,” he said. “Just seeing how this whole group meshes together. I don’t think one guy is going to make or break our team. It’s going to be a combined effort from everyone who gets out there.”

Meanwhile, Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey is a little more at home on the links than Hellebuyck — as proven by the fact he won the team’s putting challenge.

“A true underdog story. It was the stuff of legend,” he said Monday, tongue firmly planted in cheek.

The 30-year-old defenceman also has Olympic ambitions, having recently attended Canada’s orientation camp in Calgary. Morrissey was part of the gold medal winning 4 Nations squad last winter, though illness kept him out of the dramatic final which saw Connor McDavid score the overtime winner against Hellebuyck.

That absence has only fuelled him.

“For sure, in the back of my mind, whether it was throughout this summer training, on the ice and obviously looking ahead to this year, that potential opportunity definitely was extra motivation,” he said.

“You want that much more to be part of a celebration after winning a gold medal at the Olympics.”

For now, Morrissey's attention is on building off last season with a Jets team he believes is poised to take another step forward.

"There's a great excitement level," he said.

"Obviously there's some changes with our team, but really excited about the guys we brought in. I think we might have more depth than ever in this organization. Everybody looks good. It's a fun time of year. Keep trying to take those next steps as a group. That's the ultimate goal here as we get started."

You can add Morrissey to the growing list of people excited to see what Toews might be able to bring to his hometown hockey team after a two-year health-related hiatus.

"I grew up idolizing JT. I think back to 2010, when they won Olympic gold and the Stanley Cup in the same year. I would have been in Grade 10. I loved watching Chicago with Duncan Keith and Jonathan and all those guys," said Morrissey.

"I have played against him a lot, know a little bit about his story but it is pretty amazing that he is feeling great, that is first and foremost. He looks great on the ice. I think what he can bring in the locker room (is so much hockey IQ) as a three-time Stanley Cup champion, multi Olympic gold, the list goes on and on. The fact that he is feeling good and coming in it is exciting for us to add a player like that, with experience, leadership and ability."

Jets training camp opens Wednesday with medicals and testing. On-ice sessions begin Thursday at Hockey For All Centre and are open to the public, though a free ticket is required for Saturday's Fan Fest. Winnipeg will play six pre-season games, starting starting Sunday at Canada Life Centre against the Minnesota Wild.

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https://winnipegsun.com/sports/from-grade-10-fan-to-teammate-morrissey-on-toews?utm_source=winnipeg-jets

From Grade 10 fan to teammate: Morrissey on Toews

by Gordon Anderson

Not only are rookies within the Winnipeg Jets organization in awe of Jonathan Toews, so is one veteran of the club.

"I grew up idolizing JT," defenceman Josh Morrissey said on Monday. "I think back to 2010, when he won Olympic gold and the Stanley Cup in the same year."

Morrissey and his merry band of mates were out at the St. Charles Country Club for the club's shotgun start charity golf tournament.

At the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Captain Serious added one goal and seven assists as Sidney Crosby scored the game-winner on United States goaltender Ryan Miller in overtime.

Later that year, the Blackhawks beat the Philadelphia Flyers in six games. Patrick Kane netted the winning goal at 4:06 of overtime. In 22 playoff games, Toews scored seven goals and added 22 assists.

"I would have been in Grade 10," Morrissey said. "I loved watching Chicago with Duncan Keith, and Jonathan and all those guys. I have played against him a lot. I know a little bit about his story but. it is amazing he is feeling great, and that is first and foremost."

Fast forward 15 years, and Morrissey still likes what he sees from Toews. Perhaps, the 37-year-old hasn't lost too much velocity off his fastball.

"He looks great on the ice," Morrissey said. "I think what he can bring in the locker room as a three-time Stanley Cup champion, multi-Olympic gold, the list goes on and on. Captain for how long he was. He has a pretty impressive resume. The fact that he is feeling good and coming in, it is exciting for us to add a player like that, with experience, leadership and ability."

https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/morrissey-eyes-olympic-redemption-while-leading-jets-charge?utm_source=winnipeg-jets

Morrissey eyes Olympic redemption while leading Jets' charge

By Gordon Anderson

Josh Morrissey's short-term goals are to impress locally and nationally.

"Right now, the focus is having a great training camp and getting off to a great start as a team and individually, but ultimately, for sure, it's a huge goal of mine to play on (Team Canada) and have a chance to represent Canada at the Olympics," Morrissey said on Monday at the Jets' golf tournament at the St. Charles Country Club.

Morrissey has a mental rolodex of enjoyable memories from past Canadian teams that won gold in locales such as Vancouver, Sochi and Salt Lake City.

"I remember where I was when some of those moments occurred," he said. "I hope to have that chance. The camp was great to reconnect with guys from 4 Nations and get to know a couple of guys I didn't know so well. It was a great week."

The Jets defenceman was on the shortlist of the 'who's who' in hockey, among the 42 players invited to the Canadian orientation camp in Calgary late last month. The 'A' list

featured 24 players from Canada's championship squad at the 4 Nations Face-Off in February.

"It was an honour to be there," Morrissey said.

Speaking of the high-stakes game against the United States in February, Morrissey hasn't forgotten his exclusion from the final. Dallas Stars defenceman Thomas Harley took Morrissey's spot in the lineup, and Connor McDavid scored the OT winner on Connor Hellebuyck in Boston.

Morrissey picked up a short-term illness on game day. The Calgary native said it was 'crushing' to miss the final.

But that was then, and this is now.

"It was bad timing, the way it worked out," Morrissey said upon reflection "It was disappointing not being able to play in that game. For sure, in the back of my mind, whether it was throughout this summer training, on the ice and obviously looking ahead to this year, that potential opportunity was extra motivation."

Representing Canada at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milano Cortina would more than make up for his absence, a 3-2 triumph at TD Garden.

As a result, the 6-foot defender has a lot to play for this season.

"You want that much more to be part of a celebration after winning a gold medal at the Olympics," he said. "That's the ultimate goal, to be in that position and have that opportunity to be on that team and strive to win. That's added motivation for sure."

Including his Team Canada duties, Morrissey certainly had a number of 'pinch me' moments last season as the Jets won the Presidents' Trophy and landed the best overall record in Jets 2.0 history with 56 victories. They also had the best road record in the NHL with 26 wins and sported the league's best power play at 28.9 per cent.

Nikolaj Ehlers, Mason Appleton and Brandon Tanev left the team in early July. Jonathan Toews, Tanner Pearson, Gustav Nyquist and Cole Koepke were added to the everyday lineup. Haydn Fleury inked a two-year deal with the club on June 28.

"I am really excited about the guys we brought in," Morrissey said. "I think we might have more depth than ever in this organization. There's really just a sense of excitement. Everybody looks good. It's a fun time of year. Keep trying to take those next steps as a group. That's the goal as we get started here."

Even with all the accolades heaped on last year's team, they did fall 10 wins short of their primary goal, with difficult lessons learned along the way.

"We're super happy with how we took steps last year in some areas we wanted to take steps in the regular season," Morrissey said. "We found ways to be an elite defensive team, offensive team, power play, penalty kill was solid when we needed it to be. I think there's a lot of excitement."

The men's Olympic hockey tournament runs Feb. 11-22.

Training camp for the Jets opens on Thursday morning at the Hockey For All Centre with on-ice sessions.

https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/no-pressure-hellebuyck-eyes-clean-slate-after-mvp-season?utm_source=winnipeg-jets

No pressure: Hellebuyck eyes clean slate after MVP season

By Gordon Anderson

So how does arguably the best goaltender in the world maintain his all-world status.

"At this point, I'm not over-thinking anything," Jets netminder Connor Hellebuyck said on Monday. "I know the stuff that I want to work on, and I'm not in any rush to get there."

The Commerce, Mich., native and the rest of the squad were out at the St. Charles County Club for the Jets' charity golf tournament.

Hellebuyck is the reigning Hart Trophy winner as NHL's most valuable player and the defending Vezina Trophy winner as the league's top goalie. Hellebuyck went 47-12-3 with a 2.00 goals-against average, .925 save percentage and eight shutouts last year.

One thing he isn't trying to do is force or will some kind of duplication into existence. A season-long repeat might just happen organically.

"You put one piece together at a time and you put your best foot forward every single day and you continue to build something magical," he said. "I'm going to wipe all expectations of what happened last year and go in with an open mind and continue to build my game the way I want to build it."

The 10-year vet has a decade's worth of experience in guiding himself onto the path of self-discovery.

The 6-foot-4 Hellebuyck has 322 career wins and 185 losses, with a career 2.56 goals against average and a .918 save percentage.

"Experience plays everything, really," he said. "My path from now until getting in-season ready is just laid out ahead of me. I know exactly what I need to do and how to get there. Just the stress on the mind, that's what the experience kind of takes away. I'm

less stressed now and I'm very focused and motivated for what I've already done before. I've just got to continue to fall back into that line and keep putting my best foot forward."

Jonathan Toews, Tanner Pearson, Gustav Nyquist and Cole Koepke joined the team in the off season. Haydn Fleury inked a two-year deal with the club on June 28. Nikolaj Ehlers, Mason Appleton and Brandon Tanev left the team soon after the free-agent frenzy began on July 1.

"I'm excited," the goaltender said. "We've got some new faces and some guys that are ready to build on what we did last year. I'm really looking forward to the future here."

The 32-year-old was asked his thoughts on the signing of Toews, and what he could possibly provide the team in terms of intangibles.

"I could take a bunch of guesses, but I like him as a guy," Hellebuyck said. "I haven't seen him skate yet, so I'm really looking forward to our first on-ice session together. Just seeing how this whole group meshes together. I don't think one guy is going to make or break our team. It's going to be a combined effort from everyone who gets out there."

The Jets open training camp on Thursday at the Hockey For All Centre. The first exhibition game is Sept. 21 when the Minnesota Wild come to town for a 4 p.m. puck drop at Canada Life Centre. The home opener is Oct. 9 against the Dallas Stars.