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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-another-slow-start-hurts-jets>

***THREE THINGS: Another slow start hurts Jets
Kyle Connor scored the only goal for the Jets who lost 5-1 to the Sabres***

By Jamie Thomas

The Winnipeg Jets dropped their third game of this four-game road trip after a 5-1 loss to the Buffalo Sabres at KeyBank Center. Kyle Connor scored the only goal for Winnipeg who have been held to one goal or less in three of their last five games. The Jets will finish the road trip Wednesday in Montreal against the Canadiens.

BAFFLING START

It looked like the Jets were in a solid position after getting off to a solid start in Nashville on Saturday and were ready to build off that win. That did not happen as Winnipeg took an early penalty when Dylan DeMelo was whistled for holding at 1:31. Buffalo would score on the power play at 2:46 when Jason Zucker cashed in on a rebound to make it 1-0. The Sabres made it 2-0 just 15 seconds later, Jack Quinn sent a cross-ice pass to Bowen Byram who went bar down on Eric Comrie. The Sabres scored again at 14:54 and had a commanding 3-0 lead after 20, Comrie was pulled after allowing three goals on 14 shots.

"Yeah, I mean it's disappointing," said DeMelo.

"You want to carry that effort that we had in Nashville, that style of game into this one and for whatever reason we didn't."

LIFE FOR 83 SECONDS...

Thomas Milic replaced Comrie to start the second period and the Jets pulled themselves back into the hockey game at 11:26, Josh Morrissey blasted a shot from the point that was redirected by Kyle Connor past Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen to make it 3-1. However, Buffalo restored their three-goal lead at 12:49, Alex Tuch beat Milic making it 4-1 and that seemed to finish off the Jets.

"I mean, we made it 3-1 and all of a sudden, we tilted the ice for a couple of shifts in a row and then again, we were near the end of our shift and we dump a puck into the middle of the ice in the O-zone on the rush and two D are heading to the bench and all of a sudden, there you go, it's a three-on-one the other way," said head coach Scott Arniel.

"Those are mental mistakes."

TEAM MEETING

The Jets room was closed a little longer than normal after the game and Arniel let Mike McIntyre of the Winnipeg Free Press that captain Adam Lowry had a team meeting. Kyle Connor was asked what was said in the meeting and this was his response.

"Everybody's got to be a lot better," said Connor.

"Keep it at that."

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/01/hapless-jets-dismantled-by-sabres>

Hapless Jets dismantled by Sabres Return of bad habits leads to predictable, pitiful loss

By: Mike McIntyre

BUFFALO — One step forward. Two embarrassing steps back.

The Winnipeg Jets talked a good game about not letting Saturday's victory go to their heads. That positive performance against the Nashville Predators was supposed to set the table for better things to come, a reminder they're capable of success when they actually walk the walk.

So how did they follow-up at the very next opportunity? By tripping over their own feet and face-planting all over KeyBank Center. Monday's 5-1 loss to the Buffalo Sabres was as pitiful as they come — a quick return to all the bad habits that have become their calling card for much of this season.

"I'd love to give you all the answers. I think if I had them all, we wouldn't be in this position that we're in," veteran defenceman Dylan DeMelo said.

"I think that's the biggest concern, just the inconsistency we have right now in our game, in all facets."

Costly turnovers. Shoddy defending. Limited offence with absolutely no secondary scoring. And skating as slow as molasses, unable to keep up with a much speedier squad all night.

All of this, it should be noted, came against an opponent that began the night 29th-overall in the NHL standings — and hasn't made the playoffs since the Atlanta Thrashers were still a thing. Seriously.

"Whether that's stubborn or whether that's not being quick enough, not reading the situation fast enough... We kicked ourselves in that one," said coach Scott Arniel.

"We were chasing that game right from the get-go. I didn't have the warm and fuzzies about anything happening."

Winnipeg tastes defeat for the ninth time in the past 13 games, falling to 13-12-0 overall. Buffalo improves to 11-11-4, which means the two clubs are now tied in points.

THE MEETING: Per NHL regulations, teams are supposed to open their room to media within 10 minutes of the final buzzer. But it took about double that after this one, the result of a closed-door meeting that Arniel later revealed was called and led by Jets captain Adam Lowry.

"Everybody's got to be a lot better. Keep it at that," forward Kyle Connor said when asked to summarize the theme of the chat. "And I believe in this group, the leadership that we have, the players in here. It's in this room. It's got to be us to figure it out and turn this thing around, grab that identity and grab a hold of something that makes us tick. It seems like we're still trying to

find that. We have it at nights. We go into Nashville and play a great game, and we kind of show up like that tonight. It's just rallying, everybody being a leader, bringing to the table what you do good, focus on that and be the best you can every single night. Like I said, I believe in this group. Hopefully we look back on this and we grow from it, we learn from it, and use this as a positive in the future."

The team actually moved the post-game media availability to a backdrop outside the room, not bringing reporters and cameras in. Was it because they didn't want people to see the paint had been peeled off the walls?

Arniel was happy to see Lowry take control, saying the players have to find a way out of this.

"You're hoping that the response into our next game is a lot better than what it was (Monday night)," he said.

"We're a veteran group, we recognize that we just embarrassed ourselves and we're going to have to be a heck of a lot better in the next one."

THE START: Last Friday in Raleigh, Arniel bemoaned the fact that several of his players didn't show up for the start of the game. To be clear, he was talking figuratively, even though it did look at times like the Jets didn't have the same number of skaters on the ice as the Carolina Hurricanes given how porous they were.

Well, the same thing happened again 72 hours later. The Jets were merely spectators as the Sabres basically did whatever they pleased, including scoring a pair of goals 15 seconds apart.

The first came after veteran forward Vlad Namestnikov made a careless turnover in the Buffalo zone, leading to an odd-man rush which ended when DeMelo took a holding penalty. A short time later, Jason Zucker pounced on a rebound to open the scoring on the power play at 2:46 of the opening frame.

Then, with the Jets still in a fog over falling behind 1-0 for the fifth time in the last six games, defenceman Bowen Byram walked in and ripped a shot past Eric Comrie to make it 2-0 at 3:01

Sabres centre Josh Norris, who got hurt in the season-opener in early October and then missed the next 24 games, made it 3-0 later in the frame, tucking a puck past Comrie after he was given all sorts of time and space.

"We showed video, did our pre-scout of their last three games — how many opportunities they get off their rush, their four-man rush with the D," Arniel said of the talk with his team prior to puck drop.

"(And then) we gave up all of those rush opportunities and they capitalized on them. We're getting beat up the ice shift after shift after shift."

THE RESPONSE: Comrie's night was over after 20 minutes — 14 shots, 11 saves — although Arniel was quick to note this was a "mercy pull" and a chance to perhaps spark the group.

It looked like it might be working when Connor tipped a Josh Morrissey shot midway through the second period to bring the visitors within two.

However, that was short-lived as the Jets gave up another goal off the rush just over two minutes later off the stick of Alex Tuch. Then, just 41 seconds into the final frame, the sleepy Jets got burned one last time as Norris scored his second of the night.

Rinse, repeat.

"We gave up nine rush chances. They scored four goals off the rush," said Arniel. "We fed right into their offence."

Rookie Thomas Milic, making his second NHL appearance and first in mop-up duty, stopped 15 of 17 shots he faced.

"It's been a struggle at times this year to come up with that identity, play that same way, play a full 60, string games together," admitted Connor.

"These are all things that are fixable. It's not just going to be the flip of a switch and it's going to be back playing the right way. It's going to be hard work, having our assignments, everybody doing the right job, relying on each other. If one or two guys are doing the right job, it's not going to be good enough. We need everybody playing as five, as a unit. And we just feel a bit disconnected, I think."

KEY PLAY: It truly was the sequence of events early in the game — the Namestnikov turnover, the DeMelo penalty and the Zucker goal — which set the tone for what was to come.

THREE STARS:

1. Sabres C Josh Norris: 2G 1A
2. Sabres F RW Josh Doan: 2A
3. Sabres G Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen: 23 saves

EXTRA, EXTRA: The Jets went zero-for-two on the power play, while the Sabres went one-for-three.

The only area Winnipeg had an advantage in was hits, leading Buffalo 35-12. Of course, a big reason for that is the home team had the puck on their stick for much more of the night.

The Jets went with the same lineup as their 5-2 win in Nashville, meaning forward Cole Koepke and defenceman Elias Salomonsson were healthy scratches. Both play with speed, and you wonder if the Jets would have been better served against a team like Buffalo with them in the lineup.

Will they get the call on Wednesday in Montreal when the Jets wrap up this five-game road trip?

"Everything is in play here. We'll see where we are. We'll check with our injured guys. Obviously, we'll look at this and we'll make a decision for Wednesday," said Arniel.

Defenceman Neal Pionk missed a fourth consecutive game with a lower-body injury, although he's getting close to a return. Blue-liner Haydn Fleury (concussion) and goaltender Connor Hellebuyck (knee) are the others currently sidelined.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/01/jets-struggles-weigh-heavy-on-captains-shoulders>

***Jets' struggles weigh heavy on captain's shoulders
Leading Jets through slump a Sisyphean task, says Lowry***

By: Mike McIntyre

BUFFALO — So, Adam Lowry, what has life been like lately as a member of the Winnipeg Jets?

"When things aren't going well it can feel like you're pushing a boulder up a hill," the veteran centre confessed Monday morning prior to his club's game against the Buffalo Sabres.

"It seems to get heavier and heavier."

As captain of what some might perceive as a sinking ship, Lowry has taken it upon his broad shoulders to try and find calmer waters. There have been plenty of face-to-face chats with Scott Arniel and the rest of the coaching staff — far more than usual — in the ongoing search for solutions.

"I think this is the first time we've really struggled since I've been the captain," said Lowry.

He was given the honour by former coach Rick Bowness prior to the 2023-24 campaign. The Jets went 52-24-6 that year, then followed it up with an even better 56-22-4 record last season. Ah, the good old days.

"I'm just trying to be a steady presence. How can you bring some levity? How can you bring some lightness to it, where it doesn't make the task feel so impossible?" he said.

"We'd love to get 10, 12 points back in one game, but you have to just continue focusing on the task at hand. How do we stack wins together? How do we find ways for three, four, five, where before you know it this bump in the road is in the rear-view mirror?"

"I think this is the first time we've really struggled since I've been the captain."

The Jets entered Monday's game at KeyBank Center with a 13-11-0 record, having won four of their past 12 outings. That's a stretch that perfectly coincides with Lowry's return to the lineup after off-season hip surgery delayed his debut. It's an unfortunate coincidence, and one he's acutely aware of.

"You want to come in and make a positive impact. Clearly, our record with me in the lineup is not very good. That's a frustrating thing for me personally," said Lowry, who had three points (1G, 2A) through his first 12 games after putting up 36, 35 and 34 points over the past three years, including a career-high 16 goals last year.

For a player who leads by example, doing so has sometimes been a challenge.

"I knew coming in it was going to take a bit of time to get up to speed, to get comfortable," he said.

"I feel like every game I've been building. I haven't loved how I've played consistently. There's been some games I've been better than others. The reads are starting to come, I'm hanging on to the puck. Our line is starting to look more and more how we want it to look."

The trio of Lowry, Nino Niederreiter and now Alex Iafallo (Mason Appleton filled that spot last year) is often referred to as the Jets' "identity line." They arguably had their best game of the season Saturday in Nashville as Winnipeg snapped a four-game losing streak with a 5-2 win over the Predators, getting in on the heavy forecheck early and often.

"I think with the injury, he's been trying to get himself up to speed. I think he's been getting better every game. We saw him get real physical the last couple," Arniel said.

"I just think now, it's a little easier to be a bit more vocal and drive the other guys when you've got your game up and running, and I think he's getting a lot closer to that."

Arniel said his meetings with Lowry and the leadership group, including alternate captains Josh Morrissey and Mark Scheifele, have been informative, helping set the roadmap for everything from practice scheduling to slump-busting.

"Our record with me in the lineup is not very good. That's a frustrating thing for me personally."

"Our jobs (as leaders) is to try and make sure we can bring the best out of people. Whether that's things like battling confidence, whether that's talking, bringing energy, hammering down small details that Arnie wants," said Lowry.

"Whether the puck's going in or not, there's still other things you can do to help your team win. It's killing penalties, it's blocking shots, it's winning key d-zone faceoffs, it's getting the puck out when you're on a long shift."

Lowry subscribes to the "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger" school of thought, and said the adversity Winnipeg has dealt with — from early injuries to himself, Dylan Samberg and Cole Perfetti, to the current ailments hampering Connor Hellebuyck and Neal Pionk — is testing everyone.

"This is a unique territory, where we're without a huge part of our team. We haven't really, in the last few years, dealt with the amount of injuries that we've had," he said.

"It's managing that. It's managing guys not playing up to the standards they want. How do you try and keep them confident, how do you try and keep that belief in the group, how do you keep the belief in the structure and help echo what the coaches want to get across? How do you find ways to bring guys together when it feels like you have a cloud hanging over your head?"

Lowry has spoken with other NHL players and professional athletes who have undergone similar surgeries and recoveries, and believes the best is still ahead — for himself and the Jets.

"You look at the first 10, 12 games, our record was probably better than it should have been. You look at the next 10, 12, our record is probably a little worse than it should have been. I think those things even out," he said.

"The important thing is to not lose sight of the fact this is part of the journey. The recovery is part of becoming an impact player for this team again. I embrace that challenge. I know it's going to take time. I have to be patient with myself and at the same time push every day to eke out those small gains.

“Hopefully in the next couple weeks, month, I’m back to the player I know I can be.”

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/jets-embarrassed-and-disconnected-in-loss-to-buffalo-sabres>

Jets 'embarrassed' and 'disconnected' in loss to Buffalo Sabres

By Paul Friesen

A win over the Western Conference’s worst team didn’t generate even an ounce of momentum for the Winnipeg Jets two nights later.

Facing the perennially-bad Sabres in Buffalo, the Jets kicked off December with a lacklustre 5-1 loss on Monday, their fifth loss in the last six games.

Some of the words tossed around after this one: embarrassed, disconnected, stubborn. All fit to a tee.

Coming off a 5-2 win in Nashville, the Jets did nothing to suggest they’re rediscovering their game, regressing instead.

The result: a team that hasn’t made the playoffs in a decade and a half and sat in last place in the Eastern Conference walked all over the one that won the Presidents’ Trophy last year.

Make that make sense.

They tried to in a players-only meeting after the game, but Kyle Connor was reluctant to shed too much light on what was said.

“Everybody’s got to be a lot better. Keep it at that,” he told reporters in Buffalo when the players eventually emerged.

Head coach Scott Arniel says the team meeting was called not by him, but by captain Adam Lowry.

“You’re hoping that the response into our next game is a lot better than what it was tonight,” Arniel said. “We recognize that we just embarrassed ourselves and we’re going to have to be a heck of a lot better in the next one.”

Through 25 games last year, the Jets were 18-7. It took until early January for them to suffer their 12th loss.

At 13-12, this team needs a telescope to see top spot in the NHL.

The Jets came out of the gate on Monday and fell flat on their mugs, giving up far too much easy ice and allowing two Sabres goals 15 seconds apart in the first four minutes and change.

“We were chasing that game right from the get-go,” Arniel said. “I didn’t have the warm-and-fuzzies about anything.”

The first goal came with Dylan DeMelo in the penalty box, Jason Zucker banging in a loose puck that had trickled through goalie Eric Comrie.

The second saw Logan Stanley get caught and Mark Scheifele get out-skated by Bowen Byram, who wired one past Comrie on the ensuing odd-man rush.

The Jets got their own power play midway through the first but managed just one harmless shot on goal.

"If one or two guys are doing the right job, it's not going to be good enough," Connor said. "We need everybody playing as five, as a unit. And we just feel a bit disconnected."

The Sabres kept coming and the Jets made it easy on them, their third goal a masterclass in how not to defend.

Josh Norris, back from injury, was all too happy to take advantage of the free pass to the net, taking the puck there and banking it in off defenceman Dylan Samberg, who was down on a knee in the crease.

That's as good a way as any to describe how the Jets played that first period: by taking a knee. Out-shot 15-7, they were lucky they didn't give up four or five.

"Winnipeg's defence is caving in," is how former NHL'er Chris Pronger put it on the Amazon Prime broadcast. "It is a shooting gallery here on Eric Comrie."

That's why Arniel decided on the mercy-pull for Comrie, inserting Thomas Milic for the start of the second period and getting Comrie some rest for the next game in Montreal on Wednesday.

If Arniel tore some paint off the walls after that opening 20 minutes, it was hard to tell, as the Jets weren't much better in the second.

They finally got on the board midway through it, but whatever momentum generated by Connor's deflection was squashed by the Sabres 94 seconds later.

That's when Buffalo's Alex Tuch grabbed a loose puck near the corner and threw it at the net, off Milic and in, after Winnipeg was burned on a giveaway and a bad line change by their defence.

"Those are mental mistakes," Arniel said. "You get into a game like that and you make it 3-1, you've got to continue to play forward, you can't make risky plays. We fed right into their offence."

Shots were 21-14, Buffalo, through two, as the Sabres took the 4-1 lead into the third.

Not even a minute into the final 20, the Jets' top defence pair of Josh Morrissey and DeMelo watched Norris get behind them for a clear breakaway and he made them pay with the Sabres' fifth goal.

The Sabres' speed and big-play breakouts were all things the Jets studied going into this one.

Then they failed the test.

“Whether that’s stubborn or whether that’s not being quick enough, not reading the situation fast enough,” Arniel said. “We kicked ourselves in that one.”

Mercifully, that’s how it ended.

Final shots were 31-24, as the Sabres were better in every way, even on special teams, where their power play went 1-for-3, Winnipeg’s scoreless in two.

The Jets, 4-9 over their last 13, will limp into Montreal to close out their road trip on Wednesday.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/video/2025/12/02/can-jets-survive-without-hellebuyck/>

Can Jets survive without Hellebuyck? (VIDEO)

The Jets have just one win in their last six games without Connor Hellebuyck between the pipes, what's the level of concern that Winnipeg won't be able to overcome the loss of their number one netminder? Craig Button joins Jay Onrait to discuss.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/2025/12/02/they-fell-apart-jets-lose-for-the-fifth-time-in-their-last-six-games/>

'They fell apart': Jets lose for the fifth time in their last six games (VIDEO)

The Jets have just one win in their last six games without Connor Hellebuyck between the pipes, what's the level of concern that Winnipeg won't be able to overcome the loss of their number one netminder? Craig Button joins SportsCentre to discuss.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11555100/norris-shines-in-return-as-sabres-humiliate-winnipeg-jets-5-1/>

Norris shines in return as Sabres humiliate Winnipeg Jets 5-1

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

It turns out that beating the last-place Nashville Predators Saturday night wasn’t a cure-all for the Winnipeg Jets.

The Jets went into Buffalo on Monday night, got embarrassed by the Sabres in the first period, and never recovered en route to a 5-1 defeat.

The Eastern Conference’s last place Sabres scored three times in the game’s first 15 minutes and completely outclassed the Jets as Winnipeg lost for the fifth time in their last six games.

“It’s pretty disappointing that effort after playing a pretty good game in Nashville,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “Three minutes into the game – you’re down two-nothing. We gave up nine rush chances. They scored four goals off the rush. Showed video, did our pre-scout. Their last three games, how many opportunities they get off the rush with four-man rush with their ‘D’.

Whether that's stubborn or whether that's not being quick enough, not reading the situation fast enough. We kicked ourselves in that one.

"We're a veteran group, recognize we just embarrassed ourselves and we're gonna have to be a heck of a lot better next one."

Arniel indicted captain Adam Lowry called a player-only meeting following the game after winning just four times in their last 13 games.

"It's disappointing," said defenceman Dylan DeMelo. "You want to carry that effort that we had in Nashville and that style of game into this one. And for whatever reason we didn't."

"We can't hang our heads. We can't feel sorry for ourselves. No one is gonna be throwing us a lifesaver here and helping us out. We got to figure it out and we got a big game against the Habs and hopefully get that one and get that good feeling back again."

Josh Norris scored twice and also tacked on an assist for Buffalo in his return to the lineup from an injury.

Kyle Connor notched the Jets only goal as they started December much like the way most of November went.

"It's been a struggle at times this year to kinda come up with that identity," said Connor. "Play that same way. Play a full 60 (minutes), string games together. For whatever reason we just weren't able to do it again tonight."

Just 91 seconds in, DeMelo was called for holding in the neutral zone and Buffalo made the Jets pay on the power play.

With Winnipeg chasing the puck and unable to clear it, Norris was left with all kinds of time and space to find Josh Doan alone in front. He steered a hard pass on goal that trickled through Eric Comrie and sat in the crease before Jason Zucker banged it home.

It went from bad to worse for the Jets when the Sabres doubled their lead just 15 seconds later. Buffalo carved Winnipeg in transition before Bowen Byram collected a cross-ice pass, skated in on Comrie and ripped a shot past him.

The lead ballooned to three goals when Norris got on the board, playing in his first game since he was injured in the season-opener.

A clean breakout pass sprung the Sabres on a 3-on-2, where Tage Thompson dropped the puck down low in the Winnipeg end to Norris who put a backhand on goal from a tough angle. Dylan Samberg had dropped to a knee in the crease, trying to take a cross-crease pass away but the shot from Norris banked in off of Samberg.

Buffalo outshot the Jets 14-8 in the first and knocked Comrie out of the net after 20 minutes as Thomas Milic took over from there.

Winnipeg finally showed signs of life just past the midway point when they got on the board thanks to their top players. Josh Morrissey made a juke at the blue line before dropping the puck to Mark Scheifele along the wall. Morrissey then cut to the middle of the ice where he one-

timed a pass from Scheifele that Connor tipped through Ukk0-Pekka Luukkonen for his 13th goal of the season.

The good vibes for Winnipeg were short-lived as the Sabres restored the three-goal lead just 1:23 later.

A turnover and a bad line change led to a 2-on-1 for Buffalo. Alex Tuch was denied by Milic before the rebound rolled to the corner but Tuch caught up to the puck and, from just below the goal line, took a shot that banked off Milic and into the net.

The Sabres extended their lead early in the third, fileting the Jets in transition once again. Rasmus Dahlin skated behind his own net with the puck and banked it off the boards into the neutral zone where Zach Benson one-touched it to a streaking Norris. Norris stormed in on a breakaway and deked out Milic before beating him five-hole, capping off a fantastic return to the lineup.

Nothing much happened from there, save for Peyton Krebs delivering a hard, clean open ice hit on Cole Perfetti that Logan Stanley took exception to, sparking a brief melee that earned three players, including Stanley, a misconduct for the rest of the night.

Comrie got saddled with the loss, making 11 saves while Milic turned aside 15 shots in relief as the Jets have now gone 1-5 since Connor Hellebuyck went on injured reserve.

Winnipeg will wrap up this five-game road trip Wednesday night in Montreal. The puck drops just after 6:30 p.m. with pregame coverage on 680 CJOB starting a little after 4 p.m.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/report-jets-hold-closed-door-players-meeting-after-drubbing-by-sabres/>

Jets hold closed-door players meeting after drubbing by Sabres

By Sportsnet Staff

It might be the start of the holiday season, but the Winnipeg Jets sure aren't feeling festive these days.

Following a drubbing at the hands of the basement-dwelling Buffalo Sabres, Jets captain Adam Lowry initiated a closed-door players meeting, head coach Scott Arniel told reporters after the game.

Mike McIntyre of the Winnipeg Free Press was first to report the closed-door meeting.

"Tonight, that was them. That was (Lowry) taking it," Arniel said. "You're hoping the response at the end of the next game is better than what it was tonight."

The Jets lost 5-1 in Buffalo Monday night, capping off a one-month stretch in which the reigning Presidents' Trophy champions had just five wins in 14 games since Nov. 1.

"We're a veteran group," Arniel added. "We recognize we embarrassed ourselves and we're going to have to be a heck of a lot better next time."

Kyle Connor added: "Everybody's got to be a lot better. Keep it at that."

"It's pretty disappointing, that effort after playing a pretty good game at Nashville," Arniel continued. "Obviously, three minutes into the game and you're down 2-0."

The Jets dug themselves an early hole against the Sabres, surrendering goals to Jason Zucker, Bowen Byram and Josh Norris — playing for the first time since an Oct. 9 injury — to face a three-goal deficit after the first 20 minutes.

Connor cut the lead down to two midway through the second period, only to see Alex Tuch restore the three-goal lead less than two minutes later. Norris scored his second of the night, and the final dagger to the Jets, in the third period.

"We'll have to go back and look at (the game)," defenceman Dylan DeMelo said post-game. "Individually, you watch your shifts, see what you could have done better. I'm sure the staff will have things for us to look at and go from there."

"We can't hang our heads, we can't feel sorry for ourselves. No one's going to be throwing us a lifesaver here and helping us out. We've got to figure it out."

With reigning Hart Trophy champion Connor Hellebuyck injured, Eric Comrie got the start between the pipes, but was pulled after allowing three goals on 14 shots and finished with a .786 save percentage.

"Eric's been great every time his number's been called this year, so to obviously have the start in front of him that we did, it's frustrating," Connor said of his goalie. "There's not a more hardworking player or goalie than Eric."

Thomas Milic came out for the final 40 minutes, allowing two goals on 17 shots in just his second NHL game.

When asked about throwing Milic into the fire, Arniel said he was just trying to shake things up for his team that looked lifeless after the first.

"Just trying to spark. (Comrie) is a go against Montreal. Really, we were chasing that game right from the get-go and I didn't have the warm and fuzzies about anything happening."

As for the rest of his lineup for Wednesday, Arniel is mulling over a few options.

"Everything's in play here," he said. "We'll see where we are, we'll check with our injured guys. Obviously we'll look at this and make a decision for Wednesday."

The Jets will have the chance to right the ship in Montreal Wednesday, when they take on the upstart Canadiens (7 p.m. ET/ 6 p.m. CT on Sportsnet and Sportsnet+). They will then return home on Friday for a rematch with the Sabres.

Associated Press

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/norris-has-three-points-in-return-as-sabres-crush-jets/>

Norris has three points in return as Sabres crush Jets

By Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Buffalo centre Josh Norris matched his career-best single-game points total in the Sabres' 5-1 win over the Winnipeg Jets on Monday night, making a triumphant return to the lineup after sustaining an upper-body injury in the team's season opener.

Norris scored two goals and assisted on the opening goal 2:46 into the game. His second goal gave the Sabres a commanding 5-1 lead less than a minute into the third period. It was Norris' sixth three-point game and his first since Jan. 30 against Washington while playing for Ottawa.

That same game was the last time he also had a goal and an assist in the opening period.

Coach Lindy Ruff said Norris' remarkable return wasn't something that he anticipated.

"It's speed combined with puck support," Ruff said. "The puck support was real good, real evident it led to goals. It was a night where we were really connective."

The 26-year-old Norris, a first-round draft pick by the San Jose Sharks in 2017, has struggled with injuries and appeared in only his fifth game with Buffalo since being acquired in a trade last season. The Sabres are his first new team after spending parts of his first six seasons with the Senators. They have been waiting for him to take on a larger role, so this game could give him some much-needed momentum.

Norris was injured in the season-opening 4-0 loss to the New York Rangers on Oct. 9.

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Norris scores twice in return, Sabres ease past Jets Forward missed 24 games with lower-body injury; Winnipeg has lost 5 of 6

By Heather Engel

BUFFALO -- Josh Norris had two goals and an assist in his return to the lineup for the Buffalo Sabres, who defeated the Winnipeg Jets 5-1 at KeyBank Center on Monday.

Norris had missed the previous 24 games after sustaining a lower-body injury in Buffalo's season opener on Oct. 9.

"I just wanted to come back and just kind of get right back in and not be a distraction," Norris said. "I thought the guys have done a good job. They've been battling. We've had some guys out, and I know it happens across the League, but it is hard to do that when you have so many guys out. So, yeah, I just thought they did a great job up to this point, and I just wanted to come in and contribute. I'm really happy to be back."

Josh Doan and Zach Benson each had two assists, and Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen made 23 saves for the Sabres (11-11-4), who have won four of their past six games.

"It's speed combined with puck support. The puck support was real good," Buffalo coach Lindy Ruff said. "We had a lot of bump back to speed that was real evident that led to goals. It was a night where we were really connected."

Kyle Connor scored for the Jets (13-12-0), who have lost five of six. Eric Comrie allowed three goals on 14 shots before he was replaced by Thomas Milic (15 saves) at the start of the second period.

The teams will play again in Winnipeg on Friday.

"It's pretty disappointing, that effort after playing a pretty good game in Nashville (a 5-2 win on Saturday)," Jets coach Scott Arniel said. "Obviously, three minutes into the game you're down 2-0. We gave up nine rush chances, they scored four goals off the rush. ... Kicked ourselves on that one. We gave up all those rush opportunities and they capitalized on it."

Jason Zucker gave Buffalo a 1-0 lead on a power play at 2:46 of the first period. Norris sent a backdoor pass to Doan, whose redirection at the edge of the crease was stopped by Comrie. However, the rebound trickled through Comrie's pads and landed in the crease, where Zucker jammed it in.

Bowen Byram scored 15 seconds later to make it 2-0. He took a cross-ice feed from Jack Quinn on a 3-on-1 rush and beat Comrie over his blocker from the left circle.

Norris pushed it to 3-0 at 14:04. He received a pass from Tage Thompson along the goal line, cut toward the net, and scored with a backhand that deflected in off the leg of Jets defenseman Dylan Samberg.

"To replace a guy like that is [almost] impossible," Sabres forward Alex Tuch said. "He has such a high-end skill set, such a good skater. Just an unbelievable 200-foot centerman. His IQ is off the charts. He put it on full display tonight. He was unbelievable. When you miss a guy like that, it definitely hurts. It's good to get him back."

Connor cut it to 3-1 at 11:26 of the second period when he redirected Josh Morrissey's one-timer from the point through Luukkonen's five-hole.

"It's not going to be just a flip of a switch and we're going to all of a sudden be back playing the right way," Connor said. "It's going to be hard work, having our assignments, everyone doing the right job, relying on each other. If one or two guys are doing the right job, it's not going to be good enough. We need everyone playing as five, as a unit."

Tuch quickly responded for the Sabres to make it 4-1 at 12:49. Milic stopped his initial attempt from the right circle, but Tuch collected his own rebound along the goal line and banked a sharp-angled shot in off the goalie's left shoulder.

Norris extended the lead to 5-1 at 41 seconds of the third period. He skated into a touch-pass from Benson before slipping a backhand five-hole on Milic on a breakaway.

"I was a little more excited for that one," Norris said. "Just a really good play by 'Benny,' and yeah, at that point I think it's 5-1, and it's hard to come back from 5-1. So, that kind of sealed it. I was fired up for that one."

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6852518/2025/12/02/winnipeg-jets-report-cards/>

Winnipeg Jets report cards: 25 player grades after 25 games

By Murat Ates

Winnipeg played so poorly in its 25th game of the season that Scott Arniel told reporters in Buffalo the team had embarrassed itself, Kyle Connor described the team's play as "disconnected," and Adam Lowry called a players' only meeting.

These player report cards are based on the Jets' full season to date. That should make the grades a little bit better, given just how poorly Winnipeg played in Buffalo, but the Jets still fall well short of expectations at 13-12-0. There aren't a lot of A's to go around, given Winnipeg set the Stanley Cup as its goal in September but falls short of the playoff cut line on Dec. 1.

After 25 games, here are The Athletic's Winnipeg Jets report cards.

Forwards

Mark Scheifele — A+

Mark Scheifele has been the class of Winnipeg's forward group. His 13 goals and 19 assists for 32 points put him ninth in league scoring — fifth among Canadians, if you're keeping Olympic count. He's a scoring chance from prime real estate waiting to happen.

Kyle Connor — A

Kyle Connor is tied with Scheifele for the team lead in goals (13) and second in points, with 30. He's a consistent creator of dangerous scoring chances for himself and his linemates, using his shiftiness and speed to exploit open lanes and his fast hands to fool goaltenders. You'd like for him to have scored more than one power-play goal and he'll never win a Selke Trophy but Connor is consistently one of Winnipeg's most dangerous players.

Gabriel Vilardi — B+

Gabriel Vilardi has scored five goals and two assists during the Jets' 1-5-0 run, bringing him up to 21 points in 25 games this season. He's often thought of as the third most important member of the Jets' top line but has games where he steals enough pucks to help Connor and Scheifele keep attacking late in shifts. (He also has games where his lack of footspeed shows as the Jets' top line gets burned for transition offence.) Vilardi is tied with Connor and Josh Morrissey for first on the team with seven power-play points.

Nino Niederreiter — B+

Nino Niederreiter is having the best offensive season of his Jets career, with 15 points in 25 games putting him on pace for 49 at season's end. He's scored five of those points on the power play, eight at even strength, and two into an empty net while providing the same forechecking and backchecking effort as in previous seasons. NHL Edge data shows a steep decline in Niederreiter's speed this season — a concern whether it indicates that he's not moving well or that his line isn't transitioning up the ice as well.

Alex Iafallo — C+

Alex Iafallo's work rate is as high as ever and he's playing on both special teams. He's gotten most of his scoring chances within a few feet of the net, including four points on the power play. He's not been enough to put the Lowry-Niederreiter duo over the top as Mason Appleton did in recent seasons but that may say more about Lowry's hip surgery than Appleton's dominance. Iafallo's nine points in 25 games aren't a lot but it puts him seventh in Jets scoring.

Morgan Barron — C+

Morgan Barron hasn't been able to keep up his early season hot streak but he's still a unique player on the Jets roster, combining size and speed to help push the puck up ice. He's playing a big role on a successful penalty kill and hasn't had to dig as many pucks out of his net at five-on-five as a lot of his teammates. He hasn't been able to tilt the ice but has been able to track back to the centre slot and cut down on his opponents' Grade A scoring chances.

Cole Perfetti — C+

Cole Perfetti has created enough scoring chances to shoot up this list but he's only just started to finish them. His four points in 11 games represent a 30-point pace — the lowest points rate of his career — but he's shooting more often and creating more scoring chances than he did last season. Perfetti's finishing has let him down, though: The only players with worse shooting percentages at five-on-five have yet to score a goal.

Vladislav Namestnikov — C+

There just aren't enough forwards having success for the Jets this season. Vladislav Namestnikov has eight points in 25 games and his most notable Monday contribution was the giveaway that sprung Buffalo for Dylan DeMelo's holding penalty and then the Sabres' first goal. He's close to the top of Winnipeg's forward group because of chance creation more than finishing — he's usually in such good position that his impact is to help other players' flow of play.

Adam Lowry — C+

I don't think we've seen the best version of Adam Lowry yet this season. He's not moving at full speed or controlling games on the cycle. His three points in 13 games reflect a lack of offensive zone time, while he's averaging just a single shot per game. Lowry's dominant shutdown performances have been a staple of the team's success in recent seasons but he's still getting up to speed since his hip surgery.

Gustav Nyquist — C-

Gustav Nyquist is clever, he's a bit quicker than advertised, and he's not impacting the game all that much. He's yet to score his first Jets goal and is scoring at a 25 point per 82 game pace — the lowest rate of his NHL career. He grades out better than I'd expect on shot metric based models, which might speak to good decisions at the blue lines or to his ability to get pucks to the net once they're already in the zone.

Jonathan Toews — C-

If he'd had any other career or any other hometown, Jets fans would find it unacceptable that their No. 2 centre had scored only nine points in 25 games while getting outscored 20-8 at even strength. Toews is on pace for 30 points in 82 games, which represents the worst scoring rate of a Jets second-line centre since Olli Jokinen in 2012-13.

That's not to say that points are everything or that Toews is a finished product at this moment in his comeback. There are still times when it's obvious he thinks the game at a higher level than his opponents do. His poor on-ice shooting percentage may regress (slightly) in his favour, but footspeed remains a concern.

Cole Koepke — D

Cole Koepke has created enough scoring chances such that you'd expect him to have a goal by now. He hasn't buried them, although he's used his speed well on the PK. He's well short of matching his scoring pace from last season in Boston.

Tanner Pearson — D

Tanner Pearson has scored four points in 23 games without turning into the fourth-line play driver the Jets had hoped for. He's like a lot of players in the team's bottom six in that his effort level is good, his footspeed is slow, and he needs somebody else to drive his line.

Parker Ford — D

Parker Ford works hard, makes himself a pain when possible, and still has two of Winnipeg's 10 fastest speed bursts so far this season. He also got buried in terms of shots and scoring chances when he was on the ice. Ford's cross-crease pass to Brad Lambert for Lambert's first NHL goal was his only point in 11 Jets games this season.

Nikita Chibrikov — D

Nikita Chibrikov's motor didn't quit but he didn't get to the point of impacting play at the NHL level. He frequently got his wires crossed with veteran linemates, the play dying on Chibrikov's stick when a more productive option was available. He has two points in six AHL games after scoring none in 12 games with the Jets.

Brad Lambert — D

Brad Lambert has started to chip in for the Moose, scoring a goal and two assists in his last four games. This brings his total to three points in eight AHL games this season — a figure he'll need to improve upon if he's meant to prove he's an NHL player.

Defence

Josh Morrissey — A+

Josh Morrissey could finish the season as a Norris Trophy finalist. It's astonishing that he's scored 24 points in 25 games, or that the Jets are crushing his minutes, 31-17, at five-on-five. Nick his offensive totals for playing primarily behind Winnipeg's top line if you want but Cale Makar is playing an even bigger share of his minutes with Nathan MacKinnon and Martin Necas. Morrissey has been outstanding this season.

Dylan Samberg — B

Dylan Samberg is showing some signs of his usual excellence. His numbers with Neal Pionk were excellent, just like they've always been. That said, Samberg spent most of his time with Elias Salomonsson buried in his own zone and has struggled with Logan Stanley and Luke Schenn. He may be Winnipeg's best pure defender but Samberg hasn't been able to tilt the ice all by himself. The Jets have been outscored 10-4 with him on the ice (although his shot metrics are near 50 percent).

Dylan DeMelo — C+

Dylan DeMelo hasn't been the "coach's porn" puck retrieval all-star that he was early in his Jets career, nor has he struggled quite like he did to start last season. His 10 points in 25 games put

him sixth on the Jets in team scoring, but he has taken 12 minor penalties — second-most on the team to Stanley. The Jets have won his minutes as they usually do and his underlying numbers are solid. Still, it's reasonable to think DeMelo's chemistry with his Norris-contending defence partner has a disproportionate impact. He leads the Jets' sixth-ranked PK in TOI.

Neal Pionk — C+

Neal Pionk's point scoring rate prior to his injury was the lowest of his Jets career. He's typically so good at finding shot lanes for deflections as to generate power play assists, but he's scored points at less than half of last year's rates. Pionk has also been in tough at five-on-five: He's split roughly 70 percent of his minutes with Logan Stanley and Haydn Fleury after playing most of his minutes with Samberg last season. Pionk has won those five-on-five minutes, but it's taken a wild run of shooting and save percentages to get him there. He's second on the Jets' PK in TOI.

Logan Stanley — C+

Logan Stanley is outscoring Neal Pionk but losing his minutes 16-14 at five-on-five. Stanley is happy to block shots or drop the gloves but Winnipeg gives up a disproportionate number of scoring chances with him on the ice. He's playing with more confidence in the offensive zone, despite poor expected goals and exit passing numbers. Winnipeg won Stanley's minutes 28-20 last season; he might get closer to that if good health keeps him on the bottom pair (away from the other teams' stars).

Colin Miller — D

Colin Miller has a track record of better results than he's delivered so far this season. There's an era in Vegas and Buffalo where Miller was used as a top four defenceman for periods of time. Miller has been relegated to part time status on the Jets' blue line. There are times when he gets into the lineup and shines, putting his low games played totals in a curious light, but he's been beaten 6-1 at five-on-five this year and hasn't been able to register a point despite a booming shot.

Luke Schenn — D

Luke Schenn's biggest impact likely comes in the form of off-ice leadership. The Jets get roughly 40 percent of shots when he's on the ice, often struggling to break the puck out of their zone. The idea is that veteran savvy (and strength) will help in front of the net and in the corners but the Jets give up a lot of scoring chances from prime real estate. His exit passing has not been a strength this season. If there's a playoff warrior moment in his future, it's coming at the cost of the current Jets' performance.

Haydn Fleury — D

Haydn Fleury's size and speed are unique but his results resemble the other defencemen receiving poor grades. The Jets were torched 10-3 on the scoreboard when he was healthy and playing this season, enjoying some 37 percent of expected goals, according to Natural Stat Trick. He didn't score any points in 15 games, nor were his numbers better on the third pairing with Schenn than they had been playing tougher competition with Pionk. It's been a year since he was so good on the third pair that he got pushed into the top four when Samberg broke his foot.

Elias Salomonsson — N/A

Watch his puck retrievals, exit passes, and defensive zone shoulder checks, and find plenty of signs that Salomonsson can grow into a top four defenceman. There are also mistakes and poor underlying numbers; Salomonsson was hemmed in his own zone for long stretches against

Washington and Carolina. The sample size is tiny at two games; we're not crowning Salomonsson Winnipeg's exit pass king, nor are we dismissing his quality half an hour into his NHL career.

Goaltending

Connor Hellebuyck — B+

Winnipeg's Hart Trophy-winning goaltender played fewer games than usual prior to getting shut down for his arthroscopic knee surgery. A larger number of those games than usual resulted in sub-.900 numbers and the .913 he holds now would be his lowest save percentage since 2021-22 — or, the last time the Jets' team left this much to be desired. He's still an elite goaltender and the only concern is that his knee required a scope at all. The Jets would do well not to rush him back.

Eric Comrie — C

Eric Comrie's .893 save percentage in 10 games has not been enough to drag Winnipeg back into a playoff spot since Hellebuyck stepped aside — but he's clearly getting hung out to dry, too. Sometimes it looks like he's reading the play well; he's made impressive saves by pushing off at the right time and squaring up in exactly the right place. Other times, he looks small in his net as he tries to fight through traffic.

Thomas Milic — N/A

Thomas Milic made his NHL debut and that's a win. He allowed four goals in that game — and two more against the Sabres in Monday night's debacle — but battled so hard he earned praise on Hockey Night. The Jets will likely turn to him again soon, given they play a back-to-back this weekend against Buffalo and Edmonton.