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<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/2025/11/02/lamberts-first-nhl-goal-lifts-confidence>

Lambert's first NHL goal lifts confidence

By: Ken Wiebe

For Brad Lambert, it turns out reality was even better than the countless dreams.

The Winnipeg Jets rookie forward recorded his first NHL goal in Saturday's 5-2 win over the Pittsburgh Penguins.

"It exceeded them," said Lambert. "I've been dreaming of that moment. When you're playing road hockey as a kid or whatever, you're kind of envisioning those moments, so it's pretty special."

There was an element of relief for Lambert, who had a glorious chance to achieve this feat last season on Dec. 7 against the Chicago Blackhawks but had his shot from the slot sail wide.

Ford has been a frequent linemate of Lambert's with the Manitoba Moose, so it was fitting the two connected for this marker.

"Yeah, it's awesome. You couldn't write it up any better," said Lambert. "I wouldn't have it any other way. He made a great play on that goal."

For Ford, it was the first assist of his NHL career to go along with his first NHL goal, which came against the Boston Bruins in his Jets debut.

There was no question who was going to be in possession of that memorable memento.

"I think he'll let me have it," said Lambert. "He's obviously got his goal (puck)."

The timing for Lambert couldn't have been better, as he's been involved in a three-way battle for playing time with Ford and Nikita Chibrikov.

With captain Adam Lowry (hip) expected to return to the lineup as early as Tuesday against the Los Angeles Kings when the Jets open a six-game road trip, a roster move is expected to make room for the captain.

Goal aside, Lambert had his most effective outing of the campaign, using his speed effectively to create some offensive zone time for the line that also includes Cole Koepke.

The ability to generate while on the fourth line rather than playing in the middle-six forward group is also important for Lambert, since those opportunities could be even more limited once Cole Perfetti returns to action later this month.

Most importantly, by finding the back of the net, Lambert won't be spending any time worrying when that first goal might come — further unlocking his potential.

“Yeah, regardless of whether they’re going in or not, you try to play your game. But 100 per cent, it gives you more confidence,” said Lambert. “To see the puck going in the net and whenever you have success, it will boost your game a bit.”

Saturday also marked Lambert’s first NHL game against Penguins captain Sidney Crosby, which was special in its own way.

“I think every kid that comes in the league now has followed him ever since they were three or four years old. As have I,” said Lambert. “He’s been a big idol of mine growing up. I’ve loved watching him play. I love his mentality. As someone I’ve looked up to from a young age and being able to play against him was obviously special.”

Seeing Lambert soak in his special moment was something that gave his Jets teammates a boost.

“Those guys have needed to step up with the injuries we’ve had,” said Jets left-winger Kyle Connor, who scored a pair of goals, including one on a penalty shot. “They’ve done a great job, all three of those guys. No questions asked, whatever you ask them to do they come in there and do the job. Each one of them brings a different element. It’s fun, you need that, you need everybody top to bottom to contribute in the lineup. Hopefully we’re healthy the rest of the year, but teams go through this. We need everybody to step up.”

After Saturday’s game, Connor was also asked if he remembered his first NHL goal, which came on Oct. 16 of 2016 against the Dallas Stars.

“I sure do,” said Connor, who is up to eight goals and 18 points in 12 games. “Nikky Ehlers made a pass to me on a two-on-one, I scored my first goal. It’s a huge milestone. You get to the NHL, you think about everybody that’s helped you out to get there. There’s so (many) people that affect our lives — family, coaches, teammates. And then once you’re there, it’s about trying to make that next step, trying to contribute, make a difference, score a goal.

“Definitely awesome for Lambo. He’s looked great. He was skating really well tonight. For him to go to the net and score the way he did, it was great. We were happy for him.”

Jets head coach Scott Arniel has spoken frequently about how he’s been encouraged by the play of Lambert, Ford and Chibrikov, even with limited offensive production.

“Everybody’s pretty appreciative and excited for him to get that, to get it out of the way,” said Arniel. “I know he had some chances. He’s played in games before, last year, this year. You love to see it. Nice play. You maybe expect more of a flashy, down the wing, beat somebody type of goal because he has that skill set, but it’s great to see that he goes to the net. Parker makes a good play there. And obviously, that was big getting that second goal.”

Now that this first is out of the way, Lambert will go back to work in the chase to try and solidify his spot on the NHL roster.

And before he began the process of responding to the many text messages congratulating him on the achievement, Lambert had something else to take care of first — presumably thanks to a prank his teammates had pulled off.

“I was actually looking for my clothes, I don’t know where they went,” said Lambert. “I have yet to find out what’s going on. They were over there at my stall when I went to play the game, and I came back and they were gone. We’ll see if I can find them here.”

FINE LEVIED: Penguins centre Evgeni Malkin received a US\$5,000 fine — the maximum allowable under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement — for his slash to the hand of Jets defenceman Logan Stanley. Malkin was assessed a slashing minor on the play at 15:37 of the first period.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/2025/11/02/jets-prospects-first-look-into-future-after-start-of-new-season>

Jets prospects: first look into future after start of new season

By: Mike McIntyre

The Winnipeg Jets are off to another hot start this season, proving that life in the present is pretty good. But as a “draft and develop” organization, there’s always an eye on the future.

Right now, 23 prospects are skating in various leagues at various levels — players who could one day work their way into the NHL or, in a few cases, make their way back to the big club.

To help you keep tabs, we’ll be checking in on the kids each month throughout the season.

Let’s start with 11 players who are, at least in theory, closest to “The Show.” The Manitoba Moose are off to a 3-4-2 start, although they do have points in four straight games (2-0-2) after a 2-1 overtime loss on Sunday to the Texas Stars at Canada Life Centre.

We’ll go in order of draft selection:

F DAVID GUSTAFSSON (2nd round, 2018): At the age of 25 and with 149 NHL games under his belt, Gustafsson is likely beyond the “prospect” stage. But he finds himself back in the minors after a surprise demotion out of Jets training camp. The two-way forward is leading the Moose in scoring with six points (2G, 4A) so far. He’ll likely be back in the NHL at some point this year.

D VILLE HEINOLA (1st round, 2019): Similar to Gustafsson, Heinola is at a bit of a career crossroads. The 24-year-old isn’t exactly tearing it up, with just two assists and a team-worst minus-9 rating so far. A change of scenery to another NHL organization may be for the best.

D TYREL BAUER (6th round, 2020): Bauer is likely going to be a career minor-leaguer, which is perfectly fine. The former captain of the Seattle Thunderbirds brings toughness and leadership to the Moose. He has no points through his first eight games — and one heavyweight, highlight-reel fight.

D ELIAS SALOMONSSON (2nd round, 2022): Winnipeg’s top blue-line prospect continues to make a strong case for a promotion. He’s been a rock on the blue line while also chipping in with three assists so far. An NHL debut at some point this season seems likely.

F DANNY ZHILKIN (3rd round, 2022): The 21-year-old looked like a different player at Jets camp and has continued that with the Moose. He has four points (2G, 2A) so far this year after

just 10 (3G, 7A) in 53 games last year. Has become a play driver, and his 25 shots are third-most on the team.

F FABIAN WAGNER (6th round, 2022): He went on a short goal-scoring heater last year — six of his eight goals came in a five-game span — but that seems to be an offensive outlier. He has no points through eight games this year.

G DOM DIVINCENTIIS (7th round, 2022): A bumpy start so far in his second pro year, DiVincentiis has made five starts with the Moose, going 2-3-0 with a 3.45 goals-against-average and .891 save-percentage. He split last year between the AHL and ECHL, putting up strong numbers in both leagues including a combined 28-17-2 record, 2.90 GAA and .902 SV%.

F COLBY BARLOW (1st round, 2023): Barlow had an excellent training camp with Winnipeg but his momentum has seemingly come to a screeching halt, as he has just one assist through nine games as an AHL rookie. It can be a big jump from junior for some players, as the 20-year-old is discovering.

F BRAYDEN YAGER (1st round, 2023): The only player on this list not actually drafted by the Jets, but we include him because of the high-profile trade with Pittsburgh for 2022 first-rounder Rutger McGroarty. Yager has had a slightly smoother transition than Barlow to the pro ranks with two goals and two assists so far.

G THOMAS MILIC (5th round, 2023): Milic looks to have found his 2023-24 rookie form with the Moose after a tough 2024-25 campaign, which included a lengthy demotion to the ECHL. He's gone 1-1-2 with a 2.27 GAA and .912 SV%.

F JACOB JULIEN (5th round, 2023): Unfortunately he has yet to get his pro career going. The 21-year-old is expected to be out another month after suffering a lower-body injury during Moose training camp. He had 54 points (11G, 43A) in 65 games last year with the London Knights, then another 19 points (16G, 13A) in 17 playoff games as he helped lead his team to the Memorial Cup.

It's one thing to hit on your first and second-round picks. While nothing is ever guaranteed, the odds of success are much greater in those earlier rounds. But what often separates true contenders from mere pretenders is finding some hidden gold in the later stages of an NHL draft.

To that extent, the Jets might have hit paydirt when it comes to the Ontario Hockey League with four intriguing prospects.

F KEVIN HE (4th round, 2024): The 19-year-old might just be the most exciting prospect in the pipeline right now. He turned plenty of heads during Jets training camp and has carried that momentum with him to the Niagara IceDogs, where he's put up 19 points (9G, 10A) in his first 13 games. He is on track to smash last year's career-best season (36G, 39A in 62 games) and might just be playing himself onto the World Junior radar. Although he was born in Beijing, He is eligible to play for Team Canada. He's got a motor that never stops and an incredible work ethic that should serve him well.

F KIERON WALTON (6th round, 2024): Chosen two rounds later after He, the towering Walton has turned into a true power forward. He's already scored 11 goals in his first 11 games with the Sudbury Wolves after sniping 38 times in 66 OHL contests last year. Walton, who stands six-

foot-six, also has eight assists. Another potential candidate to don the Maple Leaf at the end of December.

D EDISON ENGLE (6th round, 2025): The 18-year-old from Illinois has made a seamless transition from the USHL to the OHL, putting up 14 points (2G, 12A) and an incredible plus-14 rating through 13 games with the Brantford Bulldogs. Engle is fourth in league scoring among rookies and looking like the real deal. He's expected to head to college next year to play with Dubuque.

F JACOB CLOUTIER (7th round, 2025): The speedy right-shot winger from Ottawa has 10 points (6G, 4A) through 13 games with the Saginaw Spirit, including his first career hat trick last week. Now in his second OHL year, that's some solid progression after a good rookie year (23G, 24A in 67 games).

Over in the Western Hockey League, the Jets currently have just one player.

F OWEN MARTIN (3rd round, 2025): It's been a slower start for the Oakbank product, with just two goals (one was an overtime winner) and one assist through 12 games with the Spokane Chiefs. Martin, 18, had 34 points (13G, 21A) in 39 games last year.

Heading south, Winnipeg has four prospects in the college ranks.

D GARRETT BROWN (4th round, 2022): Now in his third year with a powerhouse University of Denver program — they won the national title in 2024 — the 21-year-old right-shot is developing into a solid stay-at-home defender. Brown, the son of former NHLer Curtis Brown, has four assists through his first eight games this year. He had eight points (2G, 6A) in 42 games last year.

F ZACH NEHRING (3rd round, 2023): The North Dakota native won the Frozen Four last spring with his Western Michigan squad, putting up 30 points (13G, 17A) in 42 games. Nehring, 20, has six points (1G, 5A) in eight games so far this year.

F CONNOR LEVIS (7th round, 2023): Levis had a great 2024-25 season in the WHL, with 56 points (23G, 33A) in 64 games with his hometown Vancouver Giants. The 21-year-old is now skating with Bowling Green State University and has a goal and a helper through his first five NCAA games.

D SASCHA BOUMEDIENNE (1st round, 2025): The Swedish defenceman turned plenty of heads last year as the youngest player in college hockey, putting up 13 points (3G, 10A) in 40 games with a strong Boston University program. There's been no sophomore slump to start this year, as Boumedienne has two goals and two assists through nine games.

Finally, we head overseas where there are three players skating right now.

D ALFONS FREIJ (2nd round, 2024): Now playing full-time in the top Swedish men's league, Freij is still looking for his first point through 18 games. The Jets are very high on him — they signed him to a three-year entry-level contract last June — and will look to bring him over to North America at the end of this campaign.

F MARKUS LOPONEN (5th round, 2024): The 19-year-old Finn left home last year to play in the WHL with the Victoria Royals, putting up a solid 44 points (19G, 25A) in 65 games. He's now

gone back, suiting up with HPK Hameenlinna of SM-liiga where he has one goal and two assists through 16 games.

F VIKTOR KLINGSELL (5th round, 2025): The 18-year-old is lighting up the Swedish junior league, with 23 points (9G, 14A) in 13 games after putting up 39 (17G, 22A) in 43 contests last year. He'll likely move up to the top pro league, where he appeared in three games last season but didn't record a point.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/connor-makes-jets-history-with-rare-short-handed-penalty-shot-goal-in-win-over-penguins>

Kyle Connor makes Jets history with rare short-handed penalty-shot goal

By Gordon Anderson

Kyle Connor went roof daddy on Saturday, and Jets redux history was updated.

The Jets' star winger scored a short-handed, penalty-shot goal at 12:13 of the second period in Saturday's 5-2 win over the Pittsburgh Penguins at the Canada Life Centre.

"You've always got a few moves going through your head coming in," Connor said about his penalty shot. "I like to read and react to how the goalie reads or bites, or something else. It just kind of opened up."

Connor skated in and went backhand, top shelf on the glove side of Penguins netminder Arturs Silovs.

"He comes in so fast," Silovs said. "I thought he was going to be a little bit slower, so I (didn't) have time to look up (to see) where he was."

It was the third short-handed penalty-shot goal in franchise history, but the first since the team headed north from Atlanta.

Patrick Stefan scored one in 2003 for the Thrashers, and Eric Perrin again in 2008.

The basic philosophy on the penalty-kill is to pressure the puck in all three zones. Silovs skated into the corner, above the goal line, to play the puck as Connor put the pressure on. Silovs mishandled the puck, and Connor swooped in to pick up the wayward disc and headed for the empty net. Kris Letang prevented Connor from throwing the puck into the net, but Silovs threw his stick towards the net front.

After a discussion, the referees awarded Connor the penalty shot.

On the ensuing opportunity, Connor tossed the puck over the left shoulder of Silovs for his seventh goal of the season.

Connor also scored an empty-net goal at 18:39 of the third period for his eighth goal of the season.

While he has 292 goals in his NHL career, this marker is somewhat unusual.

"I wasn't sure what was going on," Connor said of Silov's stick-throw.

"The open net was what was going through my mind. I didn't know the rule, so I didn't know if they were discussing whether it was a goal. I didn't really expect a penalty shot. It was nice I got another shot at it."

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/vlad-namestnikov-a-rotating-and-crucial-component-for-the-jets>

Vlad Namestnikov's versatility, new linemates paying off for the Jets

By Gordon Anderson

Vlad Namestnikov is a rotating and crucial component in the engine of the Jets.

While head coach Scott Arniel has had to put his forward lines a blender, Namestnikov's versatility has come in handy.

On Saturday against the visiting Pittsburgh Penguins, Namestnikov was on the left wing with Jonathan Toews and Alex Iafallo. The Russian forward scored the game-winner in the Jets 5-2 victory.

At other times, he has centered a line with Nino Niederreiter and Nikita Chibrikov.

"He is a guy that, he is a Swiss army knife, you can put (him) in different spots, power play and penalty kill, obviously different roles and different lines," Arniel said.

"I think him and JT and AI, all three of them, are veteran guys, and I like the way they work together," Arniel added. "That line has been good for us."

Namestnikov's goal at 1:17 of the second period was a power-play tally, with Toews and Iafallo picking up the helpers.

"That is three games now where they have gone out and created zone time, scored some goals," Arniel said.

"Vladdy, he has done that for us, scored big goals for us, like the one the other night (against Chicago), on the power play, on the entry. On Saturday, he goes to the net, does a lot of hard stuff and I appreciate that, as a coach."

For the first time in his career, Namestnikov has scored a goal in three consecutive games.

Captain Adam Lowry is likely to rejoin the Jets on the upcoming six-game trip through the western half of North America, stopping in Los Angeles and Calgary, as part of the 11-day road trip.