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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/topic/Salomonsson%20gets%20first%20career%20NHL%20goal%20in%20loss%20to%20Ducks/jets-lose-in-ot-in-hellebuyck-s-return>

Jets lose in OT in Hellebuyck's return Salomonsson gets first career NHL goal in loss to Ducks

By Jamie Thomas

Chris Kreider scored at 4:47 of overtime to give the Anaheim Ducks a 5-4 win over the Winnipeg Jets at Honda Center. Alex Iafallo (1G, 1A), Kyle Connor (1G, 1A), Cole Perfetti (2A) and Logan Stanley (2A) all had multi-point efforts for the Jets who lost for the ninth time in ten contests that went past regulation. Elias Salomonsson scored his first NHL goal as well, the Jets will wrap up this three-game road trip Sunday afternoon against the San Jose Sharks.

JETS GET HELLE BACK

After winning the gold medal with the United States and posting a save percentage of .956 in the tournament, Connor Hellebuyck got the start in goal for the Jets on Friday night. The 32-year-old is hoping as well as his teammates that his success in Milan will help carry the Jets into the playoff race. Hellebuyck made a season high 35 saves against one of the highest scoring teams in the league including a few big stops in overtime before Kreider ended the game.

QUICK STRIKES

The Jets gave up the first goal of the game on Wednesday on the first shot in Vancouver, tonight, it was their turn to do the same. Off the rush, Winnipeg entered the Ducks zone and Cole Perfetti sent a cross-ice pass to Alex Iafallo and his wrist shot went off a skate, the post and into the net for a 1-0 Jets lead 84 seconds into the game.

In the second frame, Pavel Mintyukov would take a penalty for holding and less than a minute into the Jets power play, Gabriel Vilardi one-timed a Kyle Connor pass into the net for his 23rd of the season to make it 2-0.

With the score 2-1 Jets at the start of the third, Elias Salomonsson recorded his first NHL goal coming in from the point and ripping a shot past Lukas Dostal to restore Winnipeg's two-goal lead at 1:27. Salomonsson (21 years, 181 days) became the fifth-youngest defenseman in Jets/Thrashers history at the time of his first NHL goal, behind Zach Bogosian (18 years, 186 days on Jan. 17, 2009), Ville Heinola (18 years, 220 days on Oct. 8, 2019), Jacob Trouba (19 years, 217 days on Oct. 1, 2013) and Sami Niku (21 years, 175 days on April 3, 2018).

"We had a great shift in the o-zone there, winning back the puck there. Lows the guy in the middle there, jumping in," said Salomonsson.

"I stepped right into it. I was happy to see that one go in, it was pretty special."

WILD THIRD PERIOD

The Ducks would not go away though as they erased the Jets two-goal third period lead with three straight goals starting with a power play goal from Leo Carlsson at 6:32, Pavel Mintyukov scored on a rebound at 9:59 and Ryan Poehling gave Anaheim their first lead at 16:50. However, less than two minutes after the Poehling goal, Perfetti sent a highlight reel pass to Kyle Connor and the Jets sniper tied the game with 1:22 left in the period to send the game to

overtime, marking Winnipeg's latest game-tying goal since Feb. 24, 2025 (Josh Morrissey at 59:34).

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-anaheim-ducks-game-recap-february-27-2026>

Kreider's late OT goal lifts Ducks past Jets

Sennecke has 3 assists for Anaheim, which has won 4 straight

By Dan Arritt

ANAHEIM -- Chris Kreider scored with 13 seconds left in overtime to give the Anaheim Ducks a 5-4 win against the Winnipeg Jets at Honda Center on Friday.

Kreider tapped in the puck at the left post off a pass from Beckett Sennecke, who toe-dragged Logan Stanley in the slot to make the play.

Sennecke had three assists, Pavel Mintyukov had a goal and an assist, and Lukas Dostal made 29 saves for Anaheim (32-23-3), which rallied from two goals down in the third period before recovering for its fourth straight win.

"We just have that belief in ourselves that we're never out of it," Sennecke said. "That's kind of the biggest thing in these comeback wins is we never think we're out of it, and we know we can score goals."

Alex Iafallo and Kyle Connor each had a goal and an assist, Stanley and Cole Perfetti each had two assists, and Connor Hellebuyck made 35 saves for Winnipeg (23-26-9), which was coming off a 3-2 overtime win at the Vancouver Canucks on Wednesday.

"Obviously, we had the two-goal lead twice and gave that up," Jets coach Scott Arniel said. "We had some leads that we should have found a way to bring home."

Elias Salomonsson scored his first NHL goal to push the Jets' lead to 3-1 at 1:27 of the third period. After Mason McTavish lost possession of the puck in the defensive zone, the 21-year-old defenseman took a pass from Adam Lowry and scored blocker side with a snap shot from just above the right circle.

"Stepped right into it and, yeah, happy to see that one go in," said Salomonsson, who was playing in his 15th NHL game. "So, it's pretty special."

Leo Carlsson cut it to 3-2 while on a power play at 6:32. He knocked in a rebound at the edge of the crease after Jackson LaCombe batted the puck out of midair over a sprawled Hellebuyck near the right post.

Mintyukov tied it 3-3 at 9:59, burying a rebound into an open net from the bottom of the left circle.

Ryan Poehling then put the Ducks ahead 4-3 at 16:50. Shortly after a Jets power play expired, Poehling skated in on a rush, made a move around Dylan Samberg, and lifted a rolling puck over Hellebuyck's glove.

Connor responded for Winnipeg with Hellebuyck pulled for the extra skater to tie it 4-4 at 18:38. He scored with a one-timer from the right circle off a spinning pass from Perfetti.

"The 6-on-5 goal was big at the end," Arniel said. "Got a point out of it."

Alex Lafallo gave the Jets a 1-0 lead at 1:24 of the first period. He took a cross-ice pass from Perfetti at the top of the right circle and scored blocker side with a wrist shot through traffic.

It was the second straight game that the Ducks had given up a goal on the first shot.

"We've got to get better starts because we can't play every game down like that," LaCombe said. "It's just not going to work, but proud of the effort in the third."

Gabriel Vilardi made it 2-0 at 2:25 of the second period, scoring with a one-timer from between the hash marks while on a power play.

Jacob Trouba made it 2-1 at 19:19 with a slap shot from the right point that sailed through traffic before going in off Hellebuyck's glove.

"He's one of the best goalies in the world, so you're probably not going to beat him clean," Sennecke said of Hellebuyck. "So, you just want to create a rebound and get bodies at the net."

NOTES: Anaheim, which also rallied from multiple goals down to defeat the Edmonton Oilers 6-5 on Wednesday, leads the NHL with nine multigoal comeback wins this season. ... The Jets are 3-9 in games that have ended past regulation this season. The Ducks are 13-3. ... Hellebuyck was making his first appearance since helping Team USA win the gold medal at the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026. ... Winnipeg forward Mark Scheifele appeared to sustain a lower-body injury just before Kreider's game-winning goal, and forward Vladislav Namestnikov had to be helped off the ice after colliding with Lowry during a delayed penalty early in the second period. Arniel did not have an update on either player. ... Connor extended his point streak to seven games (four goals, five assists). ... Dostal is 10-1-0 in his past 11 games.

Associated Press

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/kreider-beats-hellebuyck-in-ot-to-lift-ducks-past-jets/>

Kreider beats Hellebuyck in OT to lift Ducks past Jets

By Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Chris Kreider beat Connor Hellebuyck off a rebound at 4:47 of overtime to give the Anaheim Ducks a 5-4 victory over the Winnipeg Jets on Friday night.

Beckett Sennecke kept the puck and shot on a two-on-one break, with Kreider backhanding the loose puck in at the side of the net.

After Leo Carlsson, Pavel Mintyukov and Ryan Poehling scored third-period goals to give Anaheim a 4-3 lead, Winnipeg's Kyle Connor tied it with 1:22 left and Hellebuyck off for an extra attacker.

Hellebuyck made 35 saves in his first game since backstopping the United States to Olympic gold.

Jacob Trouba also scored for Anaheim, Sennecke had three assists and Lukas Dostal made 29 saves. The Ducks have won seven in a row at home and 11 of 13 overall.

Anaheim won two nights after returning from the break to beat Edmonton at home for coach Joel Quenneville's 1,000th NHL victory. The Ducks have five games left on a nine-game homestand.

Winnipeg rookie defenseman Elias Salomonsson had his first NHL goal and Alex Lafallo and Gabriel Vilardi also scored. Well back in the race for a playoff spot, Winnipeg has a game left on three-game trip before an eight-game homestand.

Up next

Jets: At San Jose on Sunday.

Ducks: Host Calgary on Sunday.

Canadian Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/02/27/manitoba-premier-says-usa-mens-hockey-team-offside-for-behaviour-on-trump-phone-call>

Manitoba premier says U.S. men's hockey team offside on Trump phone call

By: Dayne Patterson, The Canadian Press

Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew is praising Winnipeg Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck for his performance in this year's Winter Olympics, but says when it comes to promoting sport and respect, the entire U.S. men's hockey team was way offside.

Kinew, speaking to reporters in Winnipeg, made the comment when asked about the American players celebrating in their dressing room after their gold medal win over Canada and laughing at disparaging comments about the gold medal-winning women's team made by U.S. President Donald Trump.

"The women's team, for America, deserved a lot better than they got, both from the men's team but also from their president," Kinew said Friday.

"With Hellebuyck, I'm a Winnipeg Jets fan, so I'm going to bite my tongue about the Trump stuff. But (to Hellebuyck), win a Stanley Cup for our city now."

The Michigan-born Hellebuyck was considered the difference maker, as he fended off waves of Team Canada attacks en route to a 2-1 overtime victory Sunday. Days earlier, the U.S. women's hockey team capped off a dominant Olympic tournament performance with a 2-1 gold medal overtime win over Canada.

Kinew said lucky bounces, upset wins and losses are part of sport, but the U.S. team missed the bigger picture.

“The reason I’m a hockey parent is because I want (my kids) to learn life lessons,” the premier said. “I want them to learn how to play on a team. I want them to learn how to overcome adversity. And I want them to learn how to be respectful.

“I think on that count, the Team USA men’s team failed us.”

After the men’s win, Trump dialed into the U.S. dressing room and invited them to attend his state of the union address two days later. The president added that he would have to invite the women’s team as well or he’d risk being impeached, which led to players laughing at the comment many saw as sexist.

A number of players, including Hellebuyck, joined Trump at the White House on Tuesday and were later cheered at the Capitol during his speech. The women’s team didn’t receive a congratulatory call from the president and politely declined the invitation to attend.

Trump also announced Hellebuyck would receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country’s highest civilian honour.

The dressing room phone call got political on both sides of the border this week, as various Olympic players returned to their NHL teams. Many on the U.S. men’s hockey team said they were caught up in the celebration. Boston Bruins goalie Jeremy Swayman said they “should have reacted differently” to Trump’s remarks.

The Jets are on a California road swing and fighting for a playoff spot. Hellebuyck was expected to rejoin the team for a game Friday night against the Ducks in Anaheim.

In a team video interview posted Thursday, Hellebuyck addressed the controversy.

“We were so excited, on Cloud 9 coming into that (dressing) room, and then some things unfolded. And I’m sorry that that’s the way that they unfolded,” he said.

“It’s very unfortunate (with) the criticism that we’re taking for all this, because that’s not the way we intended it.

“We used the women’s gold medal game as a motivation for us to win gold.”

Hellebuyck said he went to the White House to celebrate a historic win in a historic place.

It still feels “surreal” to earn the Presidential Medal of Freedom, he said, and he was “shaking” after getting the news.

In Winnipeg, fans have found many ways to describe Hellebuyck’s Olympic-winning performance: spectacular, lights out, team-shouldering — but also heartbreaking.

“He had a tournament for the ages,” said Jeff Baquiran, a Jets superfan. “When the chips were down and everything was on the line, he came up when he had to and, yeah, wrong team.”

Michael Dubé said it stung to see the goaltender lead a charge to beat Canada. “We outplayed them throughout the whole game, basically,” he said.

Tony Ollenberger, a Jets fan from Saskatoon, said he hopes to see the same gold medal-level performance from Hellebuyck in an NHL jersey. “Why couldn’t you be that guy in the Jets uniform instead of just always in a Team USA uniform?” Ollenberger asked.

The Jets return home Tuesday for a game against the Chicago Blackhawks.

In the video interview, Hellebuyck said now comes the awkward part.

“Because I play in Winnipeg and I play in a Canadian city, where I’ve given my heart and soul for my entire career,” he said.

“To go into a moment like that where now I have to kind of break the hearts (of the fans) of where I play, it’s tough mentally.

“I want them to be just as happy as I am.”

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/02/28/next-man-up>

Next man up

Jets replacement to make season debut after Namestnikov injury

By: Ken Wiebe

ANAHEIM – After being assigned to the American Hockey League late in training camp, Walker Duehr put his head down and went to work, quietly going about his business as he waited for his number to be called.

Signed by the Jets last summer as an unrestricted free agent to add organizational depth at forward, Duehr has been one of the most consistent performers with the Manitoba Moose this season.

With Vladislav Namestnikov suffering a lower-body injury early in the second period on Friday, Duehr will make his Jets’ debut on Sunday afternoon against the San Jose Sharks.

Duehr — who was signed as a college free agent by the Calgary Flames in April of 2021 after completing his NCAA career with Minnesota State University-Mankato — is a hard-working right-winger who plays a feisty game and has equalled his AHL career high for points with 26 (12 goals) in 39 games with the Moose.

“Yeah the hockey world is funny the way it works out sometimes. It’ll be good to play against them,” said Duehr, who has 92 NHL games on his resume with the Flames and Sharks. “I just want to play a simple game, (play) fast, hard, and be disruptive out there. Be physical and be good in my own end.”

Duehr, who turned 28 in November, isn’t going to be eased into action either, as he was skating alongside Jonathan Toews and Gustav Nyquist during Saturday’s on-ice session at the Honda Center.

“He’s a big-bodied guy,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “He can really skate. He’s having a really good year down with the Moose, especially shorthanded. He’s done a real good job on the (penalty) kill. I think he’s near the top of the league in shorthanded goals.

“We’ll throw him in there (Sunday) and let him go out and do what he does best.”

With the Jets dealing with several injuries up front, Duehr could get an extended run.

“It’s been a pretty seamless transition. The organization has been great to me,” said Duehr. “My time with the Moose has been amazing. The coaching staff and the guys on there do a great job, and we’re a close group down there. It’s been a lot of fun.

“Maybe more minutes than I’m used to, up at this level for sure. Just being able to try to be consistent production wise, bringing the effort, and being a good role model for some of the young guys down there.”

Arniel said that Namestnikov is week to week after getting tangled up with Jets captain Adam Lowry, who was tripped on the play by Ryan Poehling of the Ducks before crashing into Namestnikov.

The Jets are hoping to have top centre Mark Scheifele in the lineup on Sunday after he seemed to be favouring his right knee near the end of Friday’s overtime loss to the Anaheim Ducks.

There was one piece of good news on the injury front as defenceman Haydn Fleury is expected to return on the third pairing with Luke Schenn, replacing Ville Heinola.

Fleury has been sidelined since crashing awkwardly into the end boards in a game against the Vegas Golden Knights on Jan. 6.

“He’s obviously a veteran guy. Not having the four d-men that have been out here, it’s been hard,” said Arniel. “I’m happy to see him back and getting the chance to play. We weren’t sure how that was all going to play out. His feet, his ability to move, and his skating will certainly be effective.”

The Jets have taken three out of four available points coming out of the Olympic break, defeating the Vancouver Canucks in overtime on Wednesday before losing 5-4 in overtime to the Ducks on Friday.

The inability to close out the game after building a pair of two-goal leads was something the Jets were still lamenting on Saturday.

“It was an absolute roller-coaster of a game, highs and lows,” said Jets forward Alex Iafallo, who had a goal and an assist on Friday. “We have to find a way to win those ones, hold that lead.”

The Sharks beat the Edmonton Oilers 5-4 Saturday afternoon and they’re another one of the teams the Jets are trying to chase down in the Western Conference.

Finding a way to try to neutralize Sharks star Macklin Celebrini will be a tall task.

“He’s a super special kid,” said Duehr, who appeared in eight games with the Sharks last season after he was claimed off waivers. “The whole world just saw it at the Olympics. Great kid on and off the ice.”

This is the second of three meetings this season between the two teams, with the Sharks earning a 2-1 victory on Nov. 7 when Will Smith scored the game-winner with 4:21 to go in regulation time.

“They’re another one of these young teams in the West that have been playing real well all year,” said Arniel. “They’re a team that plays quick. We saw them early in the year and we saw a little bit of their transition. Again, it’s a young team that’s going to try and push the pace. We have to be smart in how we approach them.”

Connor Hellebuyck, who made 35 saves on Friday, is expected to get the call in goal for the Jets, while the Sharks will counter with Alex Nedeljkovic after Yaroslav Askarov faced the Oilers on Saturday.

Following Sunday’s action, the Jets will open a season-high eight-game homestand, beginning with Tuesday’s game against the Chicago Blackhawks.

Arniel revealed that winger Nino Niederreiter underwent surgery to repair the lower-body issue he’s been dealing with and he remains week-to-week.

Meanwhile, Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey has resumed skating in Winnipeg, though Arniel isn’t sure if he will be a participant with the full group in practice on Monday.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/02/28/ducks-down-jets-5-4-in-ot>

Ducks down Jets 5-4 in OT

By: Ken Wiebe

ANAHEIM – This was both a point lost and a point gained for the Winnipeg Jets.

As a result, the margin for error just got slimmer.

Despite building a 3-1 advantage early in the third period, the Jets were unable to hold the lead as they fell 5-4 in overtime to the Anaheim Ducks on Friday night at Honda Center after Chris Kreider scored with 12.3 seconds to go in the three-on-three session.

“Fans certainly got their money’s worth,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “Obviously, we had the two goal lead twice and gave that up. In the second there, we got a little bit into a trading chances scenario where we had some odd man rushes and didn’t execute, then they got odd man rushes the other way.

“But at the end of the day, we had some leads that we should have found a way to bring home. I mean, we stuck with it, and obviously the six on five goal was big at the end. We got a point out of it.”

It was an action-packed third period that included a late goal from Ducks forward Ryan Poehling before Kyle Connor provided the equalizer, ripping home a one-timer with goalie Connor Hellebuyck on the bench in favour of an extra attacker with 82 seconds left in regulation time.

“It was a lot of back and forth,” said Jets defenceman Elias Salomonsson. “They capitalized on us at the end there. We got one point and that’s important.”

By taking three of a possible four points coming out of the break, the Jets are now eight points out of the final playoff spot in the Western Conference standings, with 24 games to go in the regular season.

The Jets, who slipped to 23-26-9, close out this three-game road trip on Sunday afternoon against Macklin Celebrini and the San Jose Sharks.

Here’s a closer look at what unfolded:

REMEMBER YOUR FIRST

Salomonsson recorded his first NHL goal (and point) just 1:27 into the third period, ripping a wrister past Lukas Dostal after taking a pass from Jets captain Adam Lowry.

“I stepped right into it. I was happy to see that one go in, it was pretty special,” said Salomonsson. “I don’t really remember much. I’ve been waiting a long time for that one. I have had some good looks before, but it is good to see that one go in.

“I think I am feeling better each game here. More ice time, more responsibility, and I think I’ll grow with that and get better.”

Salomonsson, who has 15 games under his belt, is playing with poise and continues to show he can handle top-4 minutes, thanks to his mobility and smarts.

He had 17:45 of ice time on Friday, finishing with four shots on goal and five shot attempts.

“He shoots the puck a lot,” said Arniel. “He had a chance earlier, he came down the left side and had a really good look. Just did a good job of getting down and jumping in and making that play. It was a big goal at the time.

“The kid plays with a lot of confidence, with and without the puck. That’s great to see. We need him with all our injuries.”

SEEING DOUBLE

Alex Iafallo got his team on the board by taking a cross-ice pass from Cole Perfetti and unloading a quick wrister that changed direction off the stick of a Ducks player.

The goal for Iafallo was his 10th of the season, giving him double digits in goals for the eighth consecutive season.

The only time Iafallo didn’t reach the mark was in 2017-18, when he had nine as a rookie with the Los Angeles Kings after signing as an undrafted college free agent following his senior season with the University of Minnesota-Duluth Bulldogs.

Dating back to his time in the Pacific Division with the Kings, Iafallo has a knack for producing offence against the Ducks, as he's now scored eight times against them in 34 games.

The only team Iafallo has scored more against is the Vegas Golden Knights, with nine goals in 36 games.

THE KEY PLAY

Kreider finished off a pass from Becket Sennecke for the overtime winner in the waning moments of the three-on-three session.

THE THREE STARS

Becket Sennecke, Ducks: Assisted on three goals, including the OT winner.

Chris Kreider, Ducks: Scored the game-winner.

Cole Perfetti, Jets: Chipped in a pair of assists, had four shots on goal.

THE INJURY

The Jets lost versatile forward Vladislav Namestnikov to an apparent leg injury just 1:38 into the second period.

Namestnikov got tangled up with Adam Lowry in the neutral zone after the Jets captain had been tripped by the Ducks' Poehling.

Namestnikov, who was limited to six shifts and 3:51 of ice time, wasn't putting much weight on his leg as he went down the tunnel for further evaluation.

He didn't return to the game, leaving the Jets to play with 11 forwards for the bulk of the final two periods and overtime.

Arniel didn't have an update after the game, saying he hoped to know more on Saturday.

Mark Scheifele seemed to be favouring his right leg after his final shift of overtime, though Arniel was still waiting for a health update on the Jets top centre as well.

Namestnikov seems doubtful to play on Sunday, which opens the door for winger Walker Duehr to make his Jets debut.

Duehr has 12 goals and 26 points in 39 games with the Manitoba Moose of the American Hockey League this season and has 92 NHL games on his resume.

THE MILESTONE

Friday marked the 900th NHL game for Jets forward Gustav Nyquist.

Originally chosen by the Detroit Red Wings in the fourth round of the 2008 NHL Draft, Nyquist has suited up for six franchises and has 209 goals and 540 points.

"I knew it was coming up but I didn't know it was (Friday)," said Nyquist. "It's a fun milestone, obviously. What do I think of it? That I've played for a little while. I've been fortunate to be part of this league for quite a few years now. It's something I love doing, so it feels special."

Nyquist wasn't the only one who shared that sentiment.

“That’s awesome,” said DeMelo. “He’s a guy that’s been around and played on a lot of different teams. He’s a savvy veteran. A guy that’s seen it all. Whenever a guy gets to a milestone like that and is getting close to 1,000 (games), you look at the body of work and how he carries himself and how he takes care of himself. He’s been a great presence in this room. I’m really happy for him.”

Arniel showed his appreciation for Nyquist’s journey following the morning skate.

“We’ve talked about a few veteran guys that are hitting big numbers with our team,” said Arniel. “You’ve got to respect them so much, their dedication to the game and what it takes to play that many games. To train all the time and stay healthy. To be in a lot of situations, with both winning and losing. Gus is a good pro. He’s a guy that certainly can play in a lot of situations and he’s proven that on different teams that he’s played on.”

EXTRA, EXTRA

Gabe Vilardi, on the power play on a beautiful shot from the slot after a nifty feed by Connor, had the other goal for the Jets.

Jets goalie Hellebuyck rejoined his teammates and made 35 saves, while Lukas Dostal had 29 saves for the Ducks.

The Jets have now dropped nine of the past 10 games that have gone beyond regulation time, the lone exception being the overtime win over the Vancouver Canucks Wednesday.

The Jets healthy scratches were defenceman Kale Clague and Duehr. Prior to the game, the Jets returned goalie Dom DiVincentiis to the Manitoba Moose of the American Hockey League and placed forward Nino Niederreiter on injured reserve.

The Ducks roster includes a trio of players who spent time in the Jets’ organization, defenceman Jacob Trouba and forwards Jansen Harkins and Jeffrey Viel. Trouba scored the Ducks first goal on a seeing-eye wrister from the right point that made its way through some traffic.

It’s no surprise given the time of the year with just under a week to go before the NHL trade deadline, but the press box was packed with scouts as more than half of the 32 NHL teams were represented.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/2026/02/27/jets-fans-not-the-only-ones-wondering-whats-next>

Jets fans not the only ones wondering what’s next

By: Mike McIntyre and Ken Wiebe

ANAHEIM – Dylan DeMelo knows exactly what limbo looks like.

DeMelo was in his final days as a member of the Ottawa Senators in February 2020.

Although he was playing well and interested in signing a contract extension, he was on an expiring contract and negotiations never fully materialized.

So in the week before the NHL trade deadline, it was basically a matter of when and where that was left to be sorted out.

DeMelo ended up being traded to the Winnipeg Jets on Feb. 18 and his first game ended up coming against the Senators a few days later.

"It's hard sometimes when you're in limbo and you don't know what's going on," DeMelo said before the Jets faced the Anaheim Ducks in a game that was ongoing at press time. "We made our intentions known that we wanted to be there. They took it and didn't do anything with it. When I got down to the end, there were no contract talks, so I knew it was just a matter of time before I was being dealt.

"Honestly, when that kind of happened, it was good mentally because I knew my situation. Unless they bring in an offer at the 11th hour, I'm out of here."

DeMelo isn't expecting history to repeat itself next week.

His situation is much different this time and he's signed two contract extensions with the Jets since arriving.

But as someone who has been traded twice in his career, DeMelo said the March 6 NHL trade deadline can leave many players with an uneasy feeling, no matter where your team sits in the standings and where you find yourself on an organizational depth chart.

"It's nerve-wracking, for sure, because you're kind of just waiting for the domino to fall and you don't control it," said DeMelo. "Even when you don't think you're going, you never know. You see guys get traded all the time. When I got traded from San Jose to Ottawa, it was on the first day of training camp. It's part of the business.

"When you want to be somewhere and you don't know where you stand and you don't get those answers when you want them, it can be tough mentally. So, you've got to lean on your support system and maybe some teammates that have been through it and maybe talk with them."

"Even when you don't think you're going, you never know. You see guys get traded all the time." With three games left before the NHL trade deadline, the Jets are in a much different spot than they envisioned coming off a Presidents' Trophy season.

A season that began with high hopes and great expectations has morphed into a three-way battle with the St. Louis Blues and Chicago Blackhawks to stay out of the Central Division basement.

After being an obvious buyer last season, they're more likely to be in selling mode during the next week or so. How will Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff navigate the trade market and how aggressive will he get?

With eight regulars who are pending unrestricted free agents, there is an opportunity to retool the roster on the fly.

The biggest bargaining chip of the group of eight is defenceman Logan Stanley, who is having a career-year offensively, brings size and physical play and carries a low salary cap hit of US

\$1.25 million that will make him even more appealing to contending teams looking to add toughness.

There's still a chance the Jets could sign Stanley to an extension, but if they can't find common ground, he's someone that must be moved to the highest bidder.

Complicating matters is the belief from NHL insider Elliotte Friedman that the market might actually favour the buyers, since more teams are moving to that side of the bargaining table.

In this high stakes game of chicken, who blinks first can have a major impact on how many players get moved and whether general managers might consider moving off the original asking price.

Earlier this week, the Colorado Avalanche had to attach a second round pick with Sam Girard to clear cap space in a deal for fellow defenceman Brett Kulak.

While adding Kulak, who has suited up in the Stanley Cup final for the Edmonton Oilers the last two seasons, looks like a savvy pick-up, the immediate reaction surrounds what Avalanche GM Chris MacFarland might have in mind in the next trade after finding some additional wiggle room under the salary cap ceiling.

The Jets went big-game hunting for a second-line centre last March, but weren't able to swing a deal for one.

They added energetic forward Brandon Tanev and defenceman Luke Schenn to provide added edge and playoff experience.

With those deals (plus the one to acquire blue-liner Colin Miller at the deadline in 2023), the Jets don't have a second round pick or a fourth rounder in either 2026 or 2027, so it would make sense for Cheveldayoff to look to recoup some draft capital.

But for a team trying to remain in win-now mode, it's possible Cheveldayoff might be looking to acquire NHL-ready prospects rather than focusing solely on picks.

The Jets would also have the ability to take on a bad contract (especially if it expires in July) in order to acquire a sweetener from a team looking to create cap space.

Schenn is one of the Jets on an expiring contract and his Stanley Cup pedigree and robust style of play should attract several suitors.

"We're all human, so there's a certain level of stress," said Schenn. "Not everyone is blessed to have the no-trade clause. If you don't have that, especially guys with no term on their deal are being talked about. From a personal standpoint, it was easier back in the day when it was just my wife and I. But when I've got three kids and two in school, that's the thing that you think about a bit, the family aspect.

"In saying that, I feel like I've seen it all. The highs, the lows, the trades and everything in between. I don't think anything would catch me off guard."

"... I feel like I've seen it all. The highs, the lows, the trades and everything in between. I don't think anything would catch me off guard."

Schenn was traded not once but twice before the deadline in March, moving first from the Nashville Predators to the Pittsburgh Penguins before being shipped him to the Jets.

“Last year, I was completely caught off guard because I had another year on my deal and I wasn’t expecting anything. This year, I don’t have a pulse at all, to be honest with you. I really have no idea,” said Schenn. “When you’re a free agent and your team is in the position we’re in, there’s always a chance. But in saying that, it may not happen. Every time I think I have things figured out and I think I’ve got a handle on the future is when things go sideways. I’m done trying to predict what is going to happen.

“I’ve enjoyed being in Winnipeg and would love to be in a position where we can make a push ourselves. In saying that, I also understand the business side of it.”

Jets head coach Scott Arniel has been around many trade deadlines and wasn’t ready to make any predictions, other than conceding he expected chatter with Cheveldayoff to pick up now that he’s returned from a European scouting trip.

“You won’t give me until Monday on this one?” Arniel asked rhetorically. “For me, it’s just part of the business. Everybody recognizes that as you get closer and closer to the deadline, names get bantered around, with different teams and different players. The no-movement clause changes things a little bit. It’s not like everybody is available.”

The last word on the topic goes to DeMelo, who captured the feeling of many players around the NHL.

“All we have to do is to try to take care of things with what we have in our room and play the best we can,” said DeMelo. “It’s hard because there’s a part of you that honestly just wants the trade deadline to be over, so we know what we’ve got.”

Around the glass

Arrivederci

The long-awaited return of best-on-best hockey to the Winter Olympics certainly lived up to the hype, with two terrific weeks of action. Mike had a front-row seat for all of it, and has some parting thoughts:

Sidney Crosby: There is no greater ambassador for the game than Sid the Kid, and he reminded us time and time again with the way he handled himself on and off the ice, especially after seeing his tournament end with injury. He is the ultimate class act. Here’s a fun thought: Was this truly his final Olympics? I wouldn’t be so sure about that. There’s still plenty of fuel left in the tank, so don’t be so quick to discount 2030.

Macklin Celebrini: Nobody had a bigger breakout under the brightest lights than the youngest player in the tournament, who quickly shut up any critics who suggested he shouldn’t have been on the team. Celebrini is the real deal, and he truly wowed his teammates and coaches with his performance. We may ultimately see him in five Olympics over his career.

Josh Morrissey: The Hockey Gods certainly owe the Jets defenceman in a big way. It’s downright cruel that he’s now been felled by illness (4 Nations final) and injury in the last two international events. Here’s hoping a serious wave of good karma is headed in his direction.

Jon Cooper: Condolences to the Canadian coach, whose father passed away earlier this week. Cooper was a treat to deal with, and he's a soundbite machine who makes for good media.

Exclusions: Much was made about who was/wasn't on the Canadian roster, and that debate will likely continue for quite a while. But we can't help but wonder how different the gold medal game would have looked if Crosby, Morrissey, Brayden Point and Anthony Cirelli — all of whom were on the original 25-man team — were in the lineup.

Get stuffed: You've probably seen Nathan MacKinnon's hilarious "what the hell is this?" reaction to being handed an Olympic mascot stuffed animal following his team's crushing OT loss. We can confirm that while every other player came off the ice holding theirs, MacKinnon's was nowhere to be found. Did he give it to a kid? Toss it into a garbage bin? WE NEED ANSWERS!

NHL involvement: One thing that will need to be tweaked going forward is more NHL involvement in the Olympics. From the chaotic mixed zone set-up to the ridiculous inability of the league to use video clips to promote the product, there's some changes that can and should be made for future events.

Tick, tock: The focus now turns to the 2028 World Cup, as we officially enter an every-two-year rotation for international competition. We'll soon get announcements about host cities for that event and details about what it might look like. Here's hoping it extends beyond the four countries we saw at the 4 Nations. Slovakia, Czechia, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark and Latvia have all made cases for inclusion (Italy and France not so much), so might we see an expanded format? There's also the ongoing question about Russian involvement, with the door appearing to open ever-so-slightly for future inclusion. Stay tuned.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11711127/winnipeg-jets-blow-two-goal-lead-in-third-fall-in-ot-to-ducks-5-4/>

Winnipeg Jets blow two-goal lead in third, fall in OT to Ducks 5-4

By Christian Aumell Global News

In a season full of demoralizing losses for the Winnipeg Jets, this one might take the cake.

With the trade deadline a week away and needing to play close to perfect hockey to keep their faint glimmer of hope alive, they threw away a pair of two-goal leads in an eventual 5-4 overtime loss in Anaheim Friday night.

Winnipeg got the ball rolling early in the first, opening the scoring just 1:24 into the contest.

Dylan Samberg skated the puck up the ice and into the Anaheim end before dropping it to his left to Cole Perfetti. He then sent a cross-ice pass to Alex Iafallo, who took a moment to gather the pass before rifling a shot that took just the slightest deflection off an Anaheim defender and ramped past the right shoulder of Lukas Dostal.

The goal was Iafallo's tenth of the season and first in 11 games.

The score stayed 1-0 after 20 minutes as both teams failed to convert a power play chance. Winnipeg also hit the post twice while Anaheim also rang iron once as the Jets outshot the Ducks 9-7.

The Jets doubled their lead early in the second period, though it wasn't without a cost.

Adam Lowry drew a holding penalty after getting free for a partial breakaway, but before the Ducks touched the puck, Lowry lost an edge and fell to the ice, and as he slid along the ice the ankle of Vladislav Namestnikov got awkwardly twisted as it got tangled up with Lowry's legs.

Namestnikov needed a moment before he got up and gingerly left the ice, heading to the locker room where he would remain for the duration of the game.

On the ensuing power play, the Jets worked the puck around the Anaheim zone before Kyle Connor fed Gabriel Vilardi for a quick-trigger snapshot from the slot that glanced off the shaft of Dostal's stick and into the net at the 2:25 mark.

It was Vilardi's 23rd goal of the season and team-leading eighth power play marker.

Just over a minute later, Winnipeg earned their third power play of the night but it was Anaheim who managed to get a shorthanded 3-on-1. Thanks in part to a good defensive play by Ville Heinola, the Ducks weren't able to get a great shot on goal, and moments later a Cole Perfetti shot squeezed through Dostal before hitting the post, though it was then cleared to safety.

Each side took turns generating chances throughout the period, with both goalies playing well but in the final minute of the second, the Ducks finally broke through.

In the midst of a long shift in the Winnipeg end, the puck found its way to the point where Jacob Trouba fired a shot that Connor Hellebuyck tried to catch with his glove but he didn't get it cleanly, causing a shot that may have been going wide to flutter over his shoulder and into the goal with 40.9 seconds to go.

It was Trouba's third career goal against the team that drafted him ninth overall in 2012.

The shot totals in the second were large, with the Ducks getting 17 on net and the Jets responding with 13.

Anaheim nearly tied it in the opening minute of the third when a point shot was deflected in front by Chris Kreider but it hit the post, and just moments later, Winnipeg restored their two-goal lead.

The Ducks had possession of the puck in their own end when it appeared that Perfetti hauled Mason McTavish. Play continued as Anaheim protested with Lafallo keeping it in at the point, sending it to Lowry in the slot. He dropped it to a hard-charging Elias Salomonsson, whose wrist shot beat Dostal from distance for his first NHL goal.

The Ducks cut into the lead again on the power play when Leo Carlsson banged home a loose puck in front with 6:32 gone in the third.

Just over three minutes later, the game was tied. Beckett Sennecke sent a shot on goal from distance that Hellebuyck stopped but he coughed up a juicy rebound that Pavel Mintyukov buried at the 9:59 mark.

Winnipeg had a great opportunity to take the lead on a power play with just over five minutes left. Anaheim, however, got the kill, and not long after, took their first lead of the night.

Ryan Poehling got the puck just inside his own blueline and dashed up the ice with Jonathan Toews on his hip. He managed to get free of Toews before slipping through both Dylan DeMelo and Dylan Samberg, losing the handle on the puck for a brief moment before chipping a shot on goal that eluded Hellebuyck. It was a fantastic individual effort that also exploited some defensive deficiencies on the Jets.

Winnipeg would not go down without a fight, however. With the goalie pulled, Stanley missed the net from the point. Trouba was in position to track down the rebound and get a clear, but a great stick-check by Vilardi allowed Perfetti to get control of the puck and make a slick pass that Connor one-timed into the net, his 27th of the year sending the game to overtime.

Both teams had their share of chances in OT and it seemed that the game was destined for a shootout.

But in the dying seconds, Sennecke and Kreider got free on a 2-on-1. Sennecke held the puck as he made a move around a sliding Samberg, sending the puck across to Kreider who jammed it home to seal the win.

Making his first start since winning Olympic gold on Sunday, Hellebuyck allowed five goals on 40 shots, his record falling to 1-4-4 over his last nine NHL starts with a 3.20 goals against average and .892 save percentage.

The Jets will wrap up this three-game road trip in San Jose on Sunday.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11709886/analysis-more-expected-of-one-of-winnipeg-jets-two-olympic-gold-medallists/>

ANALYSIS: More expected of 1 of Winnipeg Jets' 2 Olympic gold medallists

By John Shannon CJOB

If you've ever held an Olympic gold medal, you can't help but be impressed with a couple of things.

Firstly, there's the pure weight of the award. It is certainly heavier than you might've imagined. And, secondly, we normally see just one side of the medal. I can assure you that the designers have given great consideration to both sides of the medal.

And like the medal, there are two sides to the way the two different Jets players who won gold medals have managed their success.

On one side, there was Kyle Connor — under-utilized by Mike Sullivan's group in Milan — who, after celebrating the gold-medal win for the U.S. men's hockey Olympic team, his commitment to his two families, his immediate one and the Jets, became his priorities. Connor's commitment

to the Jets was on full view in Vancouver Wednesday night. If the Jets are to make one last gasp to the Stanley Cup playoffs, Connor's skill, speed and savvy will be a big part of that story.

On the other side, Connor Hellebuyck's commitment shouldn't be questioned either. There is a real possibility that this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the goaltender and his American teammates.

In so many ways, it transcends the hockey world. For many of us ... particularly those of us who aren't elite athletes or Americans, we may not understand what has gone on in the past few days. However, we should respect it.

There is nothing wrong with expressing your patriotism. There is nothing wrong with celebrating long and hard. But it's also not wrong to wonder if Hellebuyck can win a playoff series for the Jets. What he did in Milan was exceptional. He was certainly the best player on the ice for both teams last Sunday.

But (because there's always a but), just because Hellebuyck "the American" succeeded at the Olympics does not mean he has done it as Hellebuyck "the Jet." His play in Italy was beyond reproach. He deserved the gold. Now he has to prove that he can do it for the silver in this league.

Being an Olympic champion is a tremendous honour, but last I checked, Hellebuyck plays for the Winnipeg Jets again. And as of today, that's all that matters.

Winnipeg Sun

https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/jets-salvage-a-point-in-a-5-4-ot-loss-to-the-anaheim-ducks/article_bd63cb75-d9d0-4ac0-bbdb-d966407590a9.html

Jets salvage a point in a 5-4 OT loss to the Anaheim Ducks

By Gordon Anderson

Chris Kreider capped a six-goal third period and overtime, scoring the winner at 4:45 of the extra session as the Ducks beat the Jets 5-4 on Friday night.

"The fans got their money worth," Jets head coach Scott Arniel told reporters in Anaheim. "We had a two-goal lead twice and gave that up. We had some leads that we should have found a way to bring home."

Bennett Sennecke's pass snuck through Connor Hellebuyck before the puck hit Kreider in the skate, the ex-New York Ranger jamming the puck into the open net for his 20th of the season.

"(There was) a lot of back and forth where we had some good shifts and then fell back a little bit," Jets defenceman Elias Salomonsson said. "They are a good team. They are a skilled team. We got one point and that is important."

Anaheim now has a total of 13 overtime and shootout wins. The Jets have three.

The locals held a 3-1 lead early in the final stanza, but the home team tied the game by the halfway mark of the period. Winnipeg also held a 2-0 lead late in the second but saw that lead cut in half on a Jacob Trouba goal at 19:19.

As mentioned, Salomonsson spotted the Jets a two-goal lead with his first NHL marker at 1:27 of the period, but Leo Karlsson and Pavel Mintyukov scored 3:27 apart to tie the game at three with 10:01 remaining in regulation.

"I was happy to see that one go in," Salomonsson said of his goal. "I don't really remember (much about the goal), but I have been waiting a long time for that one."

Salomonsson was credited with four shots on 17:40 of ice time.

"He is feeling very confident and he shoots the puck a lot," Arniel said. "It was a big goal at the time. The kid plays with a lot of confidence and that is good to see."

The Ducks then assumed their first lead at 16:50 when Ryan Poeling blasted a shot behind Hellebuyck for his sixth goal of the season.

Kyle Connor tied the game at 18:38 with Hellebuyck on the bench for the extra attacker, sending the game to the overtime session.

The Jets opened their three-game road trip with a 3-2 overtime victory against the Vancouver Canucks on Wednesday night.

The Jets (23-26-9) are sixth in the Western Conference wildcard chase with 55 points, eight behind the Seattle Kraken for the second spot heading into league action on Saturday. The club is now three points behind the San Jose Sharks for fifth in the West. The Jets have 24 games remaining in the regular season.

Alex Lafallo and Gabe Vilardi also scored for the Jets. Vilardi's marker came while on the powerplay. He leads the team with eight power-play goals. Mark Scheifele fell awkwardly toward the end of the overtime session, but Arniel did not have an update on the club's No. 1 centre after the game. Cole Perfetti earned two assists. He has three goals and three assists in his last five games.

Hellebuyck (13-16-8) stopped 35 of 40 shots in his first game back from the Olympics.

The Ducks (32-23-3) are 19-3-1 at home this season. They won for the ninth time when trailing a game by two goals.

Lukas Dostal (23-13-2) stopped 29 of 33 shots.

The Jets conclude the three-game trip on Sunday afternoon against the Sharks.

Ice Chips

Kale Klague and Walker Duehr were scratched. The Jets loaned Domenic DiVincentiis back to the Manitoba Moose on Friday.

Prior to game time, the Jets placed Nino Niederreiter on injured reserve. The Swiss native joins Josh Morrissey and Neal Pionk on IR. Morrissey was injured during the Olympics, and Pionk

was injured at practice prior to the team leaving Winnipeg on Tuesday for the three-game road trip.

Top 10 club

When Lafallo scored his 10th goal of the season at 1:24 of the first period, he became the fifth player on the squad to reach the double-digit mark in goals, joining Scheifele, Connor, Vilardi and Josh Morrissey. The Ducks have eight players with 10 or more goals.

Friendly fire

Vlad Namestnikov collided with Adam Lowry early in the second period and did not return. His last shift ended at 1:38. The Jets said Namestnikov suffered a lower-body injury.

“Lowry kind of fell into him,” Arniel said. “He wasn’t good enough to continue. We will find out on Saturday (about his status going forward).”

https://www.winnipegssun.com/sports/winnipeg_jets/arniels-strategy-to-challenge-jets-gm-at-the-deadline/article_b56f5fb5-9024-4a21-8ff6-b6cca80b01f3.html

‘Make it hard on him’: Jets’ Arniel on his GM at the deadline

By Paul Friesen

Scott Arniel would like to make things difficult for his general manager next week.

The Winnipeg Jets head coach oversees a team well outside the playoff line – they were nine points out with five teams ahead of them going into Friday night’s game in Anaheim – with the NHL trade deadline just one week away.

While GM Kevin Cheveldayoff may be looking at which players he could sell off at next Friday’s deadline, Arniel wants to give him a reason to think long and hard about it.

“Hopefully we make it hard on him when we go 5-0,” Arniel told a Friday media scrum in Anaheim, referring to the five games the Jets had between the Olympic break and the deadline.

While Winnipeg did beat last-place Vancouver, albeit barely, on Wednesday, winning another four is a long shot for a team that hasn’t won five in a row since the first two weeks of the season.

After taking on the Ducks, Friday, the Jets visit mediocre San Jose on Sunday, then return home to face lowly Chicago on Tuesday, the powerhouse Tampa Bay Lightning on Thursday.

Much more likely than a 5-0 run is Cheveldayoff becoming a seller, getting what he can get for some of his pending unrestricted free agents.

It’s a far cry from the buyer mode the GM was in at this time last year.

“It’s just part of the business,” Arniel said. “Everybody recognizes as it gets closer and closer to the deadline, names are bantered around different teams, different players. The no-movement clause changes things a little bit. It’s not like everybody’s available. I think the players are used to it. Management, coaches, we’ve talked a lot more.

“A lot more conversations will happen between now and the 6th.”

Cheveldayoff was to join the Jets coach for another chinwag on Friday.

Which players could be moved next week?

Here’s a look at their top pending UFA’s, with our best guess on each.

Jonathan Toews

Toews might be one of those no-movement-clause players Arniel was referring to, and he’s already said he doesn’t want to play for another team.

After a slow start that had some wondering if his comeback was ill-advised, Toews began to find his legs, and his hands, again. But he was in another seven-game pointless streak, with just one assist in his last 11, going into the weekend.

Prediction: staying.

Logan Stanley

Having a breakout season offensively, Stanley would be a fairly hot commodity on the trade market, bringing a healthy return.

The 27-year-old also gives the Jets something they don’t have a lot of: toughness. You can’t have captain Adam Lowry doing all the scrapping.

The feeling the Jets get from Stanley’s camp – ie, how amenable he is to striking a new deal to stay – will go a long way to determining his status next week.

Prediction: staying.

Luke Schenn

One of Cheveldayoff’s acquisitions at this time last year, Schenn had played 43 of 57 games going into the weekend, chipping in a goal, six assists from the blue line, with a minus-8 rating.

Prediction: traded

Cole Koepke

After scoring 10 goals with Boston last year, Koepke has half that in Winnipeg, albeit in just over half as many games.

Still just 27, he can be a useful depth forward.

Prediction: traded

Tanner Pearson

Like Koepke, Pearson was a summer free-agent signing that didn’t move the needle then and hasn’t moved it very far since.

At 33, Pearson has more miles behind him than in front. His seven goals in 48 games, with a plus-4 rating, would provide a minimal trade return.

But something is better than nothing.

Prediction: traded.

Gustav Nyquist

Another summer pickup that never bloomed. Nobody could have expected zero goals in 36 games for the 36-year-old Swede.

If this is his swan song, it will unfortunately be one to forget.

Prediction: staying.

Colin Miller

Injuries and healthy scratches have limited the 33-year-old Miller to 15 games this season.

One assist and a minus-8 rating won't have teams clamouring to acquire him. Plus, he's currently injured. Then again, you can't have too many defencemen.

Prediction: staying.

https://www.winnipegssun.com/sports/fleury-makes-his-return-against-the-san-jose-sharks/article_1f81a818-1e10-42ea-894e-6260ff1f70f6.html

Fleury makes his return against the San Jose Sharks

By Gordon Anderson

The Jets finish off a three-game road trip on Sunday afternoon in San Jose against the Sharks.

"It should be a really good game," Jets forward Alex Iafallo told reporters in Anaheim on Saturday. "We haven't seen them in a while. We'll go over some video on Sunday, but we have to be ready right away. We have to have a good start right away, whether that's playing aggressively defensively and offensively, and get shots early."

Iafallo scored his 10th goal of the season in Winnipeg's 5-4 overtime loss to the Anaheim Ducks on Friday night. Iafallo is one of five Jets to register 10 goals or more this season. The list includes Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor, Gabe Vilardi, and Josh Morrissey.

The Sharks beat the Edmonton Oilers 5-4 on Saturday afternoon. They are three points behind the Seattle Kraken for the second wildcard spot in the Western Conference heading into league action on Saturday night. The Sharks (28-25-4) will own a four-point advantage over the Jets (23-26-9) come game time on Sunday at 3 p.m.

"Another one of those young teams in the West that have been playing well all year long, led by the Macklin Celebrini," Arniel said.

The two teams have a short history this season, having played only once previously. The Sharks won 2-1 on Nov. 7 in San Jose.

"They are a young team that is trying to push the pace, and we have to be sharp and smart about how we approach that," Arniel said.

Long awaited return

Haydn Fleury will make his long-awaited return to the lineup on Sunday.

Fleury left the Jan. 6 game against the Vegas Golden Knights with 6:44 remaining in the first period after a scary incident in the Jets defensive zone.

Knights forward Keegan Kolesar nudged Fleury down to the ice after Fleury intercepted a pass in the defensive zone. The defender slid along the ice and crashed into the boards, back first while in a sitting position. After a lengthy delay, the Carlyle, Sask., native was taken off the ice on a stretcher and admitted to a local hospital. The 29-year-old suffered a broken nose, a bruised upper back, and a sore neck on the play.

“For Haydn, it seemed like quite a while for that injury, and I am so happy to see him back and getting a chance to play as we weren’t sure how that was going to play out,” Arniel said. “His feet, his ability to move and his skating will certainly be effective (against the Sharks).”

Welcome to the Jets

Forward Walker Duehr will draw into the lineup against the Sharks. His previous game in the NHL came with the Sharks just over a year ago, a Feb. 23 game against the Calgary Flames.

“He is a big-bodied guy,” Arniel said. “I saw him in training camp and watched him with the Manitoba Moose a few times. He is a big guy, heavy, can really skate and is having a good year, especially with short-handed (situations) as he is at the top of the AHL in short-handed goals.”

“I just want to play my game, play a simple game, fast, hard, and be disruptive out there,” Duehr said about his skill set and physical gifts. “I want to be physical, be good in my own end. Just be a simple and fast game.”

Duehr is second in the AHL with three short-handed goals in 39 games played. Overall, Duehr is third in team scoring with a dozen goals and 14 assists. Mason Shaw leads the way for the Moose with 32 points and David Gustafsson is second with 30 heading into AHL action on Saturday evening.

The Jets signed him on July 2 to a one-year, two-way contract with an average annual value of \$775,000 in the NHL. He played a total of 24 NHL games last year with his time split between the Flames and the Sharks.

“The organization has been great to me,” Duehr said. “My time with the Moose has been amazing. The coaching staff and the guys on there do a great job, and we’re a close group down there. We’ve been playing pretty well as a team down there. It’s been a lot of fun.”

Arniel has watched the 28-year-old Sioux Falls, S.D., native over the course of the year. The Jets promoted Duehr on Feb. 17.

“He has earned it, and that is why he has been up here and was able to practice with us last week was helpful for him,” Arniel said. “We will throw him in there and let him go out and do what he does best.”

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/7073877/2026/02/28/winnipeg-jets-trade-assets/?redirected=1>

Ranking the Winnipeg Jets' top 11 trade assets: Which ones could be in play?

By Murat Ates

The Winnipeg Jets hold out hope of a miracle stretch run, with a late charge earning the playoff spot everyone expected when the season began.

A more realistic point of view is that Winnipeg could run the table to the same .707 points percentage that placed them No. 1 in the league last season and still fall short of 90 points. The Jets will be sellers at the trade deadline, even if they stop short of the “trade every UFA” fire sale that fans may prefer.

But what will Winnipeg be selling? And what are those assets worth to the rest of the league?

Today, we rank the Jets' top trade chips from most valuable to least.

(All stats prior to Friday's game)

1. Winnipeg's 2026 first-round pick

Estimated value: Sky high. It's presently fifth overall.

Storyline: No need to overthink this one. Winnipeg's first-round pick this summer is the most valuable draft selection since the Jets took Patrik Laine No. 2 in 2016. It's the most valuable asset in the Jets' cupboard and Winnipeg should keep it.

2. Cole Perfetti, F, 24 (Winnipeg Jets)

Estimated value: A similarly promising second-line forward or second-pairing defenceman

Stats: 7 goals, 12 assists, 19 points in 43 games played

Storyline: Imagine you're the Jets and you're making calls on young, cost-controlled players with term. You've found a second-line centre on another team that looks like a good fit behind Mark Scheifele and ahead of Adam Lowry on next year's depth chart. Better yet, he's under contract for a couple of seasons at a number you're comfortable with.

Who do you think that team is asking for in return?

I don't think the Shane Wright for Cole Perfetti rumors are true, nor do I believe the Jets are shopping Perfetti. In fact, I think Winnipeg's lone RFA is a priority for the organization to sign, even if an extension doesn't get inked until late summer. We're ranking assets in terms of value, though, and Winnipeg doesn't have any other established NHL players in their early 20s. Teams will ask about him.

3. Jonathan Toews, C, 37 (Winnipeg Jets)

Estimated value: A late first-round pick

Stats: 7 goals, 12 assists, 19 points in 57 games played

Storyline: Jonathan Toews has already told The Athletic that he wouldn't consider a move — that his return to the NHL is about the Winnipeg Jets. As such, you can take him off the list of likely players to be moved.

Just don't mistake his 19-point stat line for a sign that Cup-contending teams in search of veteran depth wouldn't pay a first-round pick for him. He's a three-time Stanley Cup champion and still a respected voice in a league that saw Scott Laughton return a first-round pick last season. Playoff teams get hungry for players who have won before and Toews has won at every level. He'd have value, even as a bottom-six centre.

4. Winnipeg's 2027 first-round pick

Estimated value: A second-line centre with term on his contract, but not a star

Storyline: Winnipeg needs to get back to its draft-and-develop roots, even if it's trying to contend. Elias Salomonsson has only just dethroned Perfetti as the youngest player on the Jets roster and it's not quite guaranteed that Salomonsson will stick once Josh Morrissey and Neal Pionk get healthy. Still, next year's first-round pick should hold tremendous value. It's likely that at least one rival club is willing to bet the Jets' 2025-26 misery isn't just an aberration.

5. Logan Stanley, LHD, 27 (Winnipeg Jets)

Estimated value: Second round pick

Stats: 9 goals, 9 assists, 18 points in 56 games played

Storyline: I expect Winnipeg's asking price for Logan Stanley is a first-round pick — a stunning return based on preseason expectations. Given that Winnipeg employs Morrissey and Dylan Samberg on the left side, each of whom defends well against top competition, the Jets should take that return if they can get it. (If it seems like a stretch, consider that Florida paid a first-round pick and then some for Ben Chiarot in 2022.)

The other factor is Stanley's asking price.

The Jets would almost certainly love to have Stanley on board long-term. He's a well-loved teammate and a viable third-pairing defenceman, even when his goal scoring comes crashing back to earth. But Stanley has earned just shy of \$6 million in his six-year NHL career to date. Now that he's set career highs in goals and points — and is on track to set a new high in time on ice — the 27-year-old has earned what may be the biggest contract of his life. A five-year contract with an AAV between \$4 million and \$5 million would be life-changing for multiple generations of Stanleys on a scale well beyond his earnings to date.

That's too expensive for a third pairing defenceman scoring on an unsustainable, Kyle Connor-esque 14.1 percent of his shots.

6. Brad Lambert, RW/C, 22 (Manitoba Moose)

Estimated value: A similar reclamation project

Stats: 6 goals, 7 assists, 13 points in 36 AHL games played

Storyline: We broke down Brad Lambert's trade request earlier this season, detailing the timeline and stakes for player and club alike. Lambert's NHL ambitions have not meshed with

his AHL assignments for multiple seasons; his request was not a knee-jerk reaction to being sent down this fall.

The problem is that Lambert's value is declining. He's not the AHL All-Star who scored 55 points in 68 games two seasons ago, producing less at that level than the players he hopes to replace do in the NHL. Whether his ambition is to become an NHL player in Winnipeg or any other city, Lambert needs to find ways to generate a high volume of scoring chances from the middle of the ice against veteran players. His trade value is a similar AHL-level prospect with upside — not a high pick or established NHL contributor.

7. Tanner Pearson, LW/RW, 33 (Winnipeg Jets)

Estimated value: A mid-round draft pick

Stats: 7 goals, 3 assists, 10 points in 48 games played

Storyline: Tanner Pearson has managed seven goals, tying him for eighth among Jets players during a disappointing season for the team. The pending UFA's \$1 million cap hit makes him an easy fit for cap-strapped contenders and his experience from the Kings' 2014 Cup run should also have appeal.

8. Luke Schenn, RHD, 36 (Winnipeg Jets)

Estimated value: A mid-to-late round draft pick

Stats: 1 goal, 6 assists, 7 points in 43 games played

Storyline: Luke Schenn's trade return this season will add an exclamation mark to the price Winnipeg paid to get him one year ago. The Jets wanted a hard-nosed veteran with Stanley Cup experience and paid second-round and fourth-round draft picks to make it happen. Unfortunately, Schenn struggled in the playoffs and again during the regular season, unable to keep pace such that Winnipeg could benefit from his veteran experience and throwback playing style.

Contending teams know they need to use more than six defencemen, though. Schenn would be a sensible, plug-and-play No. 7 or 8 on a team that's already well stocked. His \$2.75 million contract hurts him a little, but two Stanley Cup wins still have cachet.

9. Gustav Nyquist, RW, 36 (Winnipeg Jets)

Estimated value: A mid-to-late round pick

Stats: 0 goals, 9 assists, 9 points in 36 games played

Storyline: The Minnesota Wild have traded for Gustav Nyquist two times, giving Columbus a fifth-round pick in 2023 and Nashville a second-round pick last season. In both cases, Nyquist was producing like a 30-plus point player, but he has not scored at nearly that rate for Winnipeg. In fact, he hasn't scored at all.

Nyquist's \$3.25 million contract is working against him as a rental but his acquisition cost should be cheap.

10. Colin Miller, RHD, 33 (Winnipeg Jets)

Estimated value: A mid-to-late round pick

Stats: 0 goals, 1 assist, 1 point in 15 games played

Storyline: Colin Miller has struggled to stay healthy this season and should not have great value at the trade deadline. Winnipeg acquired him in 2024 for a fourth-round pick and may be interested in signing him as a free agent for the second time since that trade. He's similar to Schenn in that he'd be a plug-and-play veteran for a deeper team but costs just \$1.5 million in AAV. If he had Schenn's two Stanley Cups on his resume, the 33-year-old would be the more valuable asset.

11. Ville Heinola, LHD, 24 (Winnipeg Jets)

Estimated value: A late draft pick or minor league veteran

Stats: 0 goals, 0 assists in 1 game played

Storyline: Winnipeg could dress Ville Heinola for the rest of its season and still miss the games played threshold to retain his rights this summer. This isn't the outcome anyone hoped for when Heinola made the Jets roster at 18 and then scored what's still the only goal of his NHL career. His NHL stats are nearly non-existent but his AHL production (124 points in 198 career games) is strong.

"I think the first year gave me a bit too much hope," Heinola said this week.

At this stage of his career, he's a minor league veteran and a pending free agent. He's also passed through waivers, indicating that rival clubs don't see a spot for him on their NHL roster. His most likely trade value is a player in a similar situation — with potential but without much of an NHL resume, looking for a fresh start.

Honourable mentions: Cole Koepke, Eric Comrie, Walker Duehr.