

**WinnipegJets.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/scheifele-hits-career-high-in-points-but-jets-lose-3-2>

***Scheifele hits career high in points but Jets lose 3-2  
Scheifele hits 88 points on the season, Jets miss out on chance to pull within three points of Preds***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – Nathan MacKinnon scored his 47th and 48th goals of the season leading the Colorado Avalanche to a 3-2 win over the Winnipeg Jets at Canada Life Centre. Mark Scheifele scored twice for the Jets who missed out on a chance to pull within three points of the Nashville Predators who lost to New Jersey tonight, the Preds remain five points up for the final wild card spot in the west. Connor Hellebuyck made 32 saves. The Jets will head out on the road Friday for a four-game road trip that starts Saturday in Denver against the Avalanche.

***MOVING PAST STEEN***

Mark Scheifele officially played in career game number 951 tonight which moved him past Thomas Steen making him the all-time Jets games played leader.

“Yeah, it’s really cool. Honestly, and if you would have told me that when I started my career, don’t know if I’d believe you,” said Scheifele.

“But I’m obviously very blessed to get to that point. You know, just have to thank God for keeping me healthy. And just want to keep it going.”

Naturally, it was Scheifele who opened the scoring in the first period. The Avs turned the puck over and Kyle Connor spotted Scheifele to his left, Scheifele one-timed home his 33rd of the season and tied a career high with his 87th point of the season. Connor registered his 50th assist of the season making him fourth player in Jets/Thrashers history to do so in four consecutive seasons joining Josh Morrissey, Blake Wheeler and Marian Hossa.

***ALMOST A HUGE KILL***

With the game tied 1–1 late in the second period, the Jets found themselves in trouble after taking back-to-back penalties. Jonathan Toews was first whistled for hooking Ross Colton at 18:07, and just over a minute later, Elias Salomonsson was called for delay of game after sending the puck over the glass at 19:28 while trying to clear the zone. That left Winnipeg needing to survive a 32-second 5-on-3 power play from the Avalanche to close out the period and they did just that giving up just one shot. However, the power play carried over into the third and while the Jets killed the Toews penalty, Nathan MacKinnon tapped in a loose puck over the line to give the Avs a 2-1 lead.

***88 FOR 55***

After MacKinnon made it 3-1 with his 48th at 3:55, the Jets challenged that Connor Hellebuyck had been interfered with. After a quick delay, the league ruled that there was no goaltender interference and Winnipeg was given a delay of game penalty. Fortunately for the Jets, they killed off that penalty keeping it a one goal game.

“Yeah, obviously we got some big kills. Bucky made some big saves when we needed him to,” said Scheifele.

“And, you know, we battled till the end. I think we showed a lot of resilience against a really good hockey team.”

The Jets pulled to within one off another Colorado turnover at the blueline. Gabe Vilardi spotted Cole Perfetti down low and Perfetti sent a cross-crease pass to Scheifele who scored his second of the night at 9:39 to make it 3-2. The goal gave Scheifele his 88th point of the season and set a career best in that department.

The Jets could not find a way to beat Mackenzie Blackwood despite having a power play with under seven minutes left in the game.

“Well, Colorado had a lot to do with it too. They got up 3-1 and they were really clogging, they weren’t giving us a whole lot of looks. I liked a lot of how we played. Until we got down in the game, there were a lot of good things happening. We were taking a lot of their game, their speed game, we took a lot of that away. We had our looks, we had some opportunities, not as clean as we’d hoped.

### **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/colorado-avalanche-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-march-26-2026>

***MacKinnon scores twice in 3rd, Avalanche hold off Jets to extend Central lead  
Lehkonen has assist in return for Colorado; Scheifele scores 2 for Winnipeg, which fails to gain in wild card***

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Nathan MacKinnon scored twice in the third period, and the Colorado Avalanche held on for a 3-2 win against the Winnipeg Jets at Canada Life Centre on Thursday.

“It was a good effort from our guys,” Colorado coach Jared Bednar said. “We gave up a couple of goals on turnovers on the D-zone walls and there’s a couple of things that we want to improve on, but for the most part, I think, end of the road trip, we played hard. We were competitive. Special teams did a really nice job tonight. And from the goaltender out I think we had everybody involved and we’re able to carve out a win against a really good team, a desperate hockey team.”

Jack Drury also scored, and Artturi Lehkonen had an assist in his return from an upper-body injury for the Avalanche (48-13-10), who went undefeated on a four-game road trip. Mackenzie Blackwood made 22 saves.

“Really mature (game),” Blackwood said. “They played a really hard game, didn’t get frustrated. We haven’t had a lot of success here scoring goals, but stuck with it and didn’t get down and capitalized.”

Lehkonen missed 11 games after sustaining the injury in the first period of a 4-2 win at the Los Angeles Kings on March 2.

“Good defensive hockey overall,” MacKinnon said. “Obviously, four in a row on the road is a great road trip. So, we're happy with our home game against Dallas (a 2-1 shootout win on March 18) before the roadie, then we had a great road trip.”

Colorado extended its first-place lead in the Central Division to nine points over the Dallas Stars.

“We're still fighting for first place, so every win's important until they put the mark beside our standings,” Bednar said. “So, we have something to play for down the stretch run here. And we've had a good year, but we're not comfortable -- we're still just kind of fine-tuning our game for going into the playoffs. The Jets have their business to take care of. But you're playing hungry teams every night that are jockeying for position, trying to fight into the playoffs, trying to move up the standings.”

Mark Scheifele scored twice, and Connor Hellebuyck made 32 saves for the Jets (30-30-12), who had won two in a row, but have lost four of six (2-2-2).

“(Hellebuyck) made some big saves when we needed him to,” Scheifele said. “And, you know, we battled 'til the end. I think we showed a lot of resilience against a really good hockey team.”

Winnipeg remained five points behind the Nashville Predators for the second wild card into the Stanley Cup Playoffs from the Western Conference.

“Every game is huge for us, no matter the opponent,” Jets forward Cole Perfetti said. “At this stage of the year for us, we need two points every single night, so it doesn't matter who we're playing.”

Scheifele gave Winnipeg a 1-0 lead at 9:55 of the first period. After Josh Morrissey stopped a clearing attempt at the Colorado blue line, he quickly gave it to Kyle Connor, who then fed Scheifele a backhand from the slot for a one-timer from below the left dot.

“They're a good team,” Scheifele said. “They make a lot of plays. They got some pretty dynamic players on the other side. ... We had our chances, especially early. We had a couple chances to get a few more, and Blackwood made some big saves.”

Drury tied it 1-1 at 17:40, grabbing the rebound from Sam Malinski's point shot and out-muscling Winnipeg defenseman Elias Salomonsson so he could jam it in under Hellebuyck.

“We've got a (heck) of a team in here,” Blackwood said. “It helps when all the guys are clicking. ... Everybody's a big piece of it, right down to the guy that plays the least or the most. Everybody has a role to play, so that's how we think in here.”

MacKinnon's power-play goal 13 seconds into the third period put Colorado ahead 2-1, knocking in a rebound that sat behind Hellebuyck.

MacKinnon scored again to push it to 3-1 at 3:55 off a redirect of Lehkonen's saucer pass on a 2-on-1. Winnipeg challenged the play for goaltender interference, but the goal was upheld following video review.

“You need different players at different times to step up and make a play and make an impact,” Bednar said. “First game back after injury, we got him (Lehkonen) involved quite a bit in a few

different areas of the game, and he's only getting better. There's no question, there was some rust there, a little bit of trouble finding his legs, but he made a great play at a key time, which is kind of what we're used to (him) doing. So, good all-around first game from him."

MacKinnon leads the NHL with 48 goals this season.

"He goes to the net hard twice," Bednar said. "I like the fact that he got rewarded for going to the net, for going to that inside ice. But obviously, both of them are big difference-making plays for us."

Scheifele said of MacKinnon: "He's absolutely fantastic. He's an absolute horse out there. He's a guy that works on his game so tirelessly. On the other side, he's a fun guy to watch. Makes a lot of plays, a lot of little plays, even that a lot of people don't notice. So, he's one of, if not the, one of the best, if not the best player in the League. And he shows it every single night. And it's, it's impressive to watch."

Scheifele cut it to 3-2 at 9:39 with his 34th goal this season, finishing a quick passing play from Gabriel Vilardi and Perfetti with a redirect at the edge of the crease.

Scheifele set a new career high with 88 points (34 goals, 54 assists) this season, surpassing his previous mark of 87 (39 goals, 48 assists) in 2024-25.

"Tonight, Colorado was extremely aggressive," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "They pressured us hard and they got to pucks quicker than we did. That's just something that's one of our strengths. So usually when teams get real aggressive, we have our numbers and we have bodies around and we move it quick and get it away from there. Tonight, we weren't able to do that, so we've got to turn around and play them on Saturday. We know what's coming, so we've got to be better at it."

*NOTES:* The Avalanche have held first place in the League for 123 straight game days, which passed the 2018-19 Lightning for the eighth-longest run in NHL history. The only other team in the previous 40 years with a longer run is the Detroit Red Wings (140 in 2001-02 and 124 in 2007-08). ... Colorado earned its League-leading 25th road win of the season, the third most in a campaign in franchise history, behind 2022-23 (29) and 2013-14 (26). ... MacKinnon's 14th multigoal game of 2025-26 tied Michel Goulet (14 in 1983-84) for the second most by an Avalanche/Nordiques player in a single season. Goulet (16 in 1982-83) tops the list. ... Connor became the fourth player in Jets/Atlanta Thrashers history to record consecutive 50-assist seasons, joining Josh Morrissey, Blake Wheeler and Marian Hossa (each with two). ... Jets forward Morgan Barron did not return after receiving a hit from Avalanche defenseman Josh Manson at 13:37 of the third period. Manson received a penalty for interference, and both players were levied fighting majors. Barron has entered concussion protocol, according to Arniel, but he had no further update.

## **Global Winnipeg**

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11748185/scheifele-scores-twice-on-milestone-night-but-winnipeg-jets-fall-3-2-to-avalanche/>

### ***Scheifele scores twice on milestone night but Winnipeg Jets fall 3-2 to Avalanche***

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

On a night where Mark Scheifele passed Thomas Steen for the most NHL games played in a Winnipeg Jets uniform, he did what he could to help his team beat the best team in the league.

But two goals from Scheifele was still not enough as the Jets fell 3-2 at home to the Colorado Avalanche Thursday night, putting another dent into their longshot playoff hopes.

The Jets played them tight for the first 40 minutes, and it was tied going to the third period, but the Avs struck twice in the first four minutes of the final frame and never looked back.

“They got up 3-1. They were really clogging,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “They weren’t giving us a whole lot of looks. I liked a lot of how we played. Until we got down in the game there was a lot of good things happening. We were taking a lot of their speed game. We took a lot of that away and I thought we had our looks.

“We had some opportunities. Not as clean as we had hoped. For Saturday, we’re going to have to get inside and throw some pucks into the blue paint and look for some greasy kinda goals cause they do a good job trying to keep you to the outside as we try to do to them.”

The two teams will meet again in the rematch on Saturday to complete the home and home.

Nathan MacKinnon scored twice in the third period in Colorado’s fourth straight victory. The Jets challenged the game-winning goal for goalie interference after MacKinnon hit Hellebuyck’s trapper on the tip in. But the NHL felt the contact came outside the crease.

“It was a real cross up,” said Arniel. “Referees told us he tipped the puck before his stick went into Helly’s glove. League said it was contact outside or in the white, incidental contact on the white ice. And there’s actually video where MacKinnon’s stick goes into Helly’s glove before the puck hits his stick. Three different opinions going on right now.”

The Avs had lost in their last four straight trips to Winnipeg.

Winnipeg managed just one shot in the final nine minutes and none in the final five as they weren’t even able to pull the goalie for a late push.

“We never got it clean in their zone,” said Jets forward Cole Perfetti. “Even when we did get it in, they would shoot it out. Tough for Helly (Connor Hellebuyck) to come out of the net when kinda 50-50 battles.

“Couldn’t find a clean, easy time to get him to the bench and that’s stuff is gonna happen and unfortunately we kinda just ran out of time.”

Scheifele set a new career high for points with 88 to pass last year's total. And with 951 career games, he's now played more games in a Jets uniform than any other player.

"It's really cool," said Scheifele. "Honestly, if you would have told me that when I started my career, don't know if I'd believe you, but I'm obviously very blessed to get to that point."

Morgan Barron left the game in the third period. After taking a big hit, he fought Josh Manson and took a big right to end the fight and he's now in concussion protocol.

Scheifele got Winnipeg going by opening the scoring just before the midway mark of the first period. Colorado won a draw in their own end but a clearing attempt by Devon Toews eluded Martin Necas at the point, allowing Josh Morrissey to get to it.

He sent a short pass to Kyle Connor who skated to the slot before sliding the puck to his left where Scheifele was waiting at the faceoff dot to one-time it off the back bar of the net for his 33rd of the season.

The goal also gave him 87 points on the season to tie his career high that he set last season.

The Jets couldn't quite get to the intermission with the lead, however, as Colorado drew level with 2:20 to go. Standing in front of the net, Jack Drury tried to tip a Sam Malinski point shot past Hellebuyck. Hellebuyck denied the first chance, but Drury slid the rebound through the five-hole while falling to the ice to tie the game.

Winnipeg looked strong for a decent swath of the opening frame but in the end, they were outshot 11-7.

The second period was all about penalty killing.

Winnipeg got the game's first power play look 3:20 into the second but didn't do much with it.

Colorado got their first chance at the 6:42 but the Jets penalty kill got the job done.

They would be put under major stress at the tail end of the period as Jonathan Toews was called for hooking with 1:53 left and during the kill, Elias Salomonsson put the puck over the glass on a clearing attempt.

The Jets got to the end of the period without letting Colorado capitalize but they would still have seven seconds of 5-on-3 time to start the third before having 1:22 after that of 5-on-4 time.

Call of the Wilde: Montreal Canadiens hold off Columbus, take down Blue Jackets 2-1  
But they only needed six seconds after Toews returned to the ice, before he could even get back into the Jets' end.

After the Avalanche got set up, Nazem Kadri sent a cross-ice pass to MacKinnon at the side of the net. It went off MacKinnon's skate and fluttered into the crease, sitting loose on the goal line, and the Avalanche superstar was the first to get to it, knocking it home for his league-leading 47th of the season.

Colorado took a penalty just over a minute later, and even though Winnipeg's top unit spent the entire two minutes on the ice, they failed to generate any good chances.

Right as the penalty expired, Brock Nelson stepped out of the box and was sprung on a breakaway from centre ice, but Hellebuyck turned aside his deke attempt to keep it a one goal game...for all of 16 seconds.

Not long after the ensuing faceoff, Winnipeg turned the puck over in the neutral zone. MacKinnon scooped up the puck and skated back into the Jets' end before dropping it to his left to Artturi Lehkonen. Lehkonen sent a wrister on goal as MacKinnon drove hard to the net, deflecting the puck into the net right as Hellebuyck tried to glove it out of the air.

The Jets challenged the goal for goaltender interference, believing MacKinnon contacted Hellebuyck's glove with his stick before touching the puck but the call on the ice stood, giving the Avalanche a 3-1 lead and a power play that the Jets managed to kill off.

Winnipeg found themselves on the power play again with 12:44 to go and while the Jets failed to cash in, the top unit stayed out and forced a turnover that led to Scheifele's second goal of the night.

Lehkonen had the puck along the wall and was set to exit his own zone when Scheifele got a stick on the puck, igniting a sort of ping-pong sequence where the puck went off the stick of Brent Burns to Gabriel Vilardi back to Burns and back to Vilardi before Vilardi got control of it at the blue line.

He noticed an open Cole Perfetti on the far side of the ice and sent the puck his way before Perfetti one-touched a pass to Scheifele at the back door that Scheifele steered home for 34th of the season and 88th point to set a new career high.

Colorado picked up another penalty with just over six minutes to play when Manson plastered Barron in the corner. Manson was already going to get an interference penalty on the play before Barron got up and dropped the gloves with the Colorado tough guy, who took Barron down with a big knockout punch that sent Barron to the locker room to be checked for a concussion.

Once again, Winnipeg's power play could not solve one of the league's most effective penalty kills, failing to generate a shot on goal.

Hellebuyck tried a few times to get to the bench for an extra attacker but was never able to as Colorado kept getting the puck back, eventually running out the clock on a 3-2 win.

Winnipeg remains five points out of a playoff spot thanks to Nashville's loss to New Jersey.

Hellebuyck made 32 saves in defeat as Colorado outshot the Jets 15-7 in the third and 35-24 for the game.

The two teams will meet again in Denver Saturday. Pregame coverage on 680 CJOB begins at 4 p.m. with the puck dropping just after 6 p.m.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11748691/analysis-winnipeg-jets-not-contender-nhl-central/>

### ***ANALYSIS: Winnipeg Jets no longer a legit contender in the NHL Central***

By John Shannon CJOB

As the month of March comes to a close, so too do the hopes for the Winnipeg Jets' 25-26 season. Thursday night's loss to Colorado reflected so much of what has been positive for Winnipeg since the Olympic break. They played well enough to win for about 55 minutes. The first five minutes of the third period proved too much to overcome.

In the last 30 days — 16 games — this team has eight wins, four losses and four overtime or shootout losses. That's 20 of a possible 32 points. Quite frankly, those are respectable numbers.

But this late-season surge, grasping for a playoff spot, should not disguise a season that can only be described as unfulfilling. It's too early to do a full autopsy on this Jets team, but this is just a little glimpse into the next six months of water cooler discussions.

Countless times this season we have been reminded that you can't win a playoff spot during the regular season but you can certainly lose one. For this team, for this season, that playoff spot was lost in November and December, when the Jets went 7-16-4. They had 18 points in those 61 days of the season. By comparison, Thursday night's opposition had 49 points. Forty-nine! Dallas had 43; Minnesota had 42.

Oh sure, you could point to the slow rehab of Cole Perfetti and Adam Lowry, and the surgery for Connor Hellebuyck, but if you do that, you are suggesting that this team, as constructed, might be good enough next season to compete in the tough Central Division. You are suggesting patience over change. You are suggesting that this season is an outlier.

Don't be fooled: Colorado, Dallas and Minnesota set the bar in this division. It is a bar that is certainly high, but also young and fast. Ask yourself the question, are the Jets fast enough, and young enough to play next season's 84-game schedule at the same level as the Avalanche, Stars and Wild?

Not to worry, we don't need an answer right now. There will be plenty of off-season to discuss it.

### **Canadian Press**

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2026/03/27/winnipeg-jets-colorado-avalanche-game-story-loss-recap/>

### ***MacKinnon Inches Closer to 50-Goal Mark as Avalanche Defeat Jets 3-2***

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG – Jared Bednar smiled when asked if he had any new words to describe the way Nathan MacKinnon is playing.

The Halifax-born centre scored his 47th and 48th goals of the season to propel the Colorado Avalanche to a 3-2 victory over the Winnipeg Jets on Thursday, climbing toward his second career 50-goal season (51 in 2023-24).

“Not really,” the Avalanche head coach replied. “I’ll tell you this, I didn’t think those guys were having a great game for the first half. But again, you need some guys to step up and make some plays.

“And for me tonight, I like the way he made them.”

Jets veteran centre Mark Scheifele, who also scored twice, found numerous words of praise for the 30-year-old MacKinnon.

“He’s absolutely fantastic,” Scheifele said of the fellow Canadian. “He’s an absolute horse out there. He’s a guy that works on his game so tirelessly.

“On the other side, he’s a fun guy to watch. Makes a lot of plays, a lot of little plays, even that a lot of people don’t notice. So, he’s one of the best, if not the best, player in the league. And he shows it every single night. And it’s impressive to watch.”

Scheifele leads Winnipeg with 34 goals and set a career-high 88 points in his 72nd game of the season.

Bednar pointed out MacKinnon went hard to the net twice, scoring on the power play 13 seconds into the third period to give Colorado a 2-1 lead.

The 2024 Hart Trophy winner did the same on a rush with Artturi Lehkonen, tipping in Lehkonen’s pass at 3:55 to make it 3-1. Lehkonen returned after missing 11 games with an upper-body injury.

“I like the fact (MacKinnon) got rewarded for going to the net, for going to that inside ice,” Bednar said. “But, obviously, both of them are big difference-making plays for us.”

MacKinnon leads the Avalanche in goals and points (117) and is a key reason the team sits atop the league (48-13-10).

Colorado’s victory in Winnipeg capped off a 4-0-0 road trip and extends the team’s point streak to five games (4-0-1).

“Good defensive hockey overall,” MacKinnon said. “Obviously, four in a row on the road is a great road trip.”

The play of Mackenzie Blackwood, who made 22 saves, continues the team’s strong tandem in net that includes Scott Wedgewood, MacKinnon said.

“The two he let in were not on him at all, so he played awesome,” he said. “Our goalies have been great all season.”

Blackwood returned the compliment to the guys in front of him.

“We’ve got a hell of a team in here,” the netminder said. “It helps when all the guys are clicking.

“Everybody’s a big piece of it, right down to the guy that plays the least or the most. Everybody has a role to play, so that’s how we think in here.”

The teams play a rematch Saturday when the Jets (30-30-12) travel to Denver.

“We had our looks, we had some opportunities, not as clean as we’d hoped,” Winnipeg head coach Scott Arniel said.

“For Saturday, we’re going to have to get inside and throw some pucks into the blue paint and look for some greasy goals because they do a good job of trying to keep you to the outside, as we try to do to them.”

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/03/26/jets-fail-to-make-up-ground>

#### ***Jets fail to make up ground Good effort earns them nothing against MacKinnon and Avalanche***

By: Mike McIntyre

So close. And yet, so far.

The Winnipeg Jets blew a golden opportunity to make up ground in their playoff chase on Thursday evening, dropping a hard-fought 3-2 decision to the No. 1 ranked Colorado Avalanche at Canada Life Centre.

Nathan MacKinnon took over the game in the third period, scoring his league-leading 47th and 48th goals of the season to snap a tie. The Jets managed to claw back within a goal later in the final frame, but couldn’t find the equalizer — or even gain control of the puck in order to pull goaltender Connor Hellebuyck for an extra attacker.

“We battled to the end,” said centre Mark Scheifele. “Showed a lot of resilience against a really good hockey team. We were right there.”

If you’re a glass half-full kind of person, Winnipeg at least didn’t lose any ground in the Western Conference. The Nashville Predators, who hold the final wildcard spot, lost 4-2 in regulation to the New Jersey Devils. That means the deficit remains five points, now with 10 regular season games left.

But the Jets need to do more than simply tread water at this late stage of the season.

“Every game is huge for us, no matter the opponent,” said forward Cole Perfetti. “We need two points every single night, it doesn’t matter who we’re playing. If we have the effort and battle level we did (Thursday) night, most nights we’re going to get the right result.”

Winnipeg had grabbed points in three straight games (2-0-1) but now fall to 30-30-12. Colorado improves to 48-13-10.

#### ***SCHEIFELE STANDS ALONE***

Scheifele had another milestone night at the office.

The 33-year-old suited up for his 951st game with the franchise that drafted him seventh-overall in 2011, meaning he now stands alone in Jets hockey history.

Scheifele passed Thomas Steen for most games played with a Winnipeg NHL franchise (either 1.0 or 2.0 versions).

“If you would have told me that when I started my career, don’t know if I would believe you,” said Scheifele. “I’m obviously very blessed to get to that point. Just have to thank God for keeping me healthy and just want to keep it going.”

To mark the occasion, Scheifele scored both of Winnipeg’s goals.

His first came at 9:55 of the first period to give the home team a 1-0 lead. His second came at 9:39 of the third period to cut his team’s deficit to 3-2.

Not only were they his team-leading 33th and 34th of the year, but Scheifele is now up to 88 points. That’s one more than the career high of 87 he posted last year.

### *BARRON BLINDSIDED*

There was a scary moment in the third period.

Jets forward Morgan Barron was crushed by a high, hard hit from Avalanche defenceman Josh Manson. Barron took exception to the play — which was deemed worthy of a two-minute interference penalty — and dropped the gloves with Manson, who is one tough customer.

Barron definitely got the worst of the exchange, taking a couple hard blows to the face and coming up wobbly. He needed some help getting off the ice and making his way down the tunnel, where he went straight into concussion protocol.

He did not return to the game.

This incident is sure to spark debate on whether the Jets could use some additional muscle on the team, especially after trading both Logan Stanley and Luke Schenn at the deadline.

The fact Barron had to step up and fight for himself is not ideal, but considering his two linemates are rookies Isak Rosen and Brad Lambert, they weren’t exactly going to drop the gloves with Manson.

Where’s Scheifele when you need him? We kid, but it was just one game ago that Vegas took liberties with Kyle Connor, and Scheifele stepped in to fight Brett Howden.

Again, that’s less than ideal — even though it was still the talk of the room two days later.

“Team unity. Team toughness. You don’t have to be the biggest guy, and it doesn’t always need to be the same guy stepping in,” defenceman Josh Morrissey said of what seeing Scheifele scrap meant to the team.

“Our leading scorer goes in there and protects our second leading scorer on the play. It just shows the level of buy-in from the group and how tight our team is. I think it just shows within our room more than anything that everyone’s here pulling in the same direction and we have that total buy-in.”

The Jets don't have any extra healthy forwards on a roster, so a recall from the Manitoba Moose may be required if Barron is going to miss any time.

Veteran forwards Nino Niederreiter and Vlad Namestnikov are skating in non-contact sweaters as they make their way back from injuries, but there is still no timetable on their potential returns.

### *CHALLENGING SITUATION*

The Jets ended the second period by taking two quick penalties — Jonathan Toews for hooking against MacKinnon, and then defenceman Elias Salomonsson for flipping the puck into the crowd during an attempted clear while shorthanded.

That meant starting the third period of a 1-1 game down two men.

The Avalanche needed 13 seconds to grab the lead as MacKinnon scored right after Toews' penalty had expired.

Then came the dagger at 3:55 of the period. MacKinnon perfectly tipped a feed from Artturi Lehkonen past Hellebuyck to make it 3-1 — a goal the Jets opted to challenge for goaltender interference.

There was some contact between MacKinnon's stick and Hellebuyck's glove, but it happened outside the blue paint. Officials upheld the goal following video review, and the Jets were once again shorthanded.

"It was a real cross up," said Jets coach Scott Arniel.

"The referees told us that he tipped the puck before his stick went into Helly's glove. The league said it was incidental contact in the white ice and there's actually video where MacKinnon's stick goes into Helly's glove, before the puck hits his stick. Three different opinions going on right now."

*KEY PLAY:* MacKinnon's second of the game put the Jets in a two-goal hole.

"He's absolutely fantastic. He's a horse out there that works on his game so tirelessly," said Scheifele. "He's one of, if not the best, players in the league."

### *THREE STARS*

1. COL C Nathan MacKinnon: 2 goals
2. WPG C Mark Scheifele: 2 goals
3. COL C Jack Drury: 1 goal

### *EXTRA, EXTRA*

The Jets went 0-for-4 on the power play, which has really struggled of late and cost them some winnable games. Winnipeg killed off three of four penalties they took.

Shot attempts were 70-47 in favour of the Avalanche. Hellebuyck stopped 32 of 35 shots, while Mackenzie Blackwood turned aside 22 of 24 pucks.

“They make a lot of plays. They’ve got some pretty dynamic players on the other side,” Scheifele said. “We had our chances, especially early, to get a few more and Blackwood made some big saves.”

Defencemen Ville Heinola and Jacob Bryson were Winnipeg’s two healthy scratches.

A crowd of 14,357 took in the game. That’s slightly above the season average of 14,166. Winnipeg has three home dates remaining.

The Jets now hit the road for four straight games, starting Saturday evening in Denver for a rematch against the Avalanche.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/03/26/vilardi-on-course-for-career-season>

***Vilardi on course for career season  
Jets’ forward suits up for 72nd game, two points back of tying personal points record***

By: Ken Wiebe

The significance is not lost on Gabriel Vilardi, even if he wasn’t ready to fully lean into it.

The Winnipeg Jets forward was standing in front of reporters on Thursday morning following the morning skate and was faced with a question about what it meant to appear in Game 72 for the first time in his NHL career.

“I know when I first came into it was more of a thing back then, but, I mean, I think I’ve proven now for the most part, that I’ve been healthy for the majority of my seasons,” said Vilardi. “That’s cool. It’s a new career high. But there’s a lot more to be playing for right now than individual stuff.”

That Vilardi was more interested in discussing other matters is no surprise.

Having to miss games due to injury is no fun for anyone, especially when it derailed several of Vilardi’s highly-productive seasons, both during his time with the Jets and the Los Angeles Kings.

When you’ve spent as much time having to rehab injuries, having to relive those challenges wouldn’t be something anyone would be looking forward to.

Upon his arrival in the blockbuster deal for Pierre-Luc Dubois, Vilardi spoke about the importance of being available for the bulk of the games on the schedule.

After being limited to 47 games in his first season with the Jets due to knee and spleen injuries, Vilardi appeared in the first 71 games last season before suffering an upper-body injury against the Buffalo Sabres that knocked him out of the final 11 outings and the first four in the first-round series with the St. Louis Blues.

Make no mistake, this isn’t just about showing up for work and clocking in to watch the games played pile up, Vilardi is having an outstanding season on a number of fronts.

He went into Thursday's action tied for his career high in goals (27) and two points shy of the 61 he had last season (which was also a career-best).

Vilardi has spent a good chunk of the season on the Jets' top line with Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor, but he's recently done some solid work alongside captain Adam Lowry and Cole Perfetti.

That trio has provided some of the secondary scoring this season — an area that has plagued the Jets throughout the first 60-plus games or so.

"We've had a lot of good looks," said Vilardi, who was originally chosen 11th overall by the Kings in the 2017 draft. "We're not, necessarily scoring as much as we'd like."

That's vintage Vilardi — always hungry for more.

It's one of the reasons Jets head coach Scott Arniel discussed moving Vilardi off the top line in an effort to provide a bit more balance in the lineup.

Sure, there are still times when the Jets are looking for offence when Vilardi might get bumped back up the depth chart — his ability to drive his own line has been an important development.

"He doesn't change if he's playing with (Scheifele) and KC or if he gets out with (Perfetti) and (Lowry)," said Arniel. "He knows where he has to get to. He plays that lower half of the ice in the offensive zone. Puck possession. He buys time for Fetts or Low to get open or get to the slot or find an open area and that's what he does well.

"As much as we talk about the power play and his goal scoring ability, he's a really good passer and he does make great plays. And you just see the confidence in him now. He knows what's on the line for us as a group and as a team. We need more than one line scoring. We talked about it with him moving to that line and he was the first to say, 'I've got no issues playing with those two guys.' He's a guy that we needed to step up for this last stretch run and he's done a good job of that."

That slick passing ability was on display in Tuesday's 4-1 win over the Vegas Golden Knights when he found Perfetti for a backdoor tap-in on a two-on-one rush.

Vilardi shrugged his shoulders when asked about the pass in question, which got plenty of play on highlight reels.

"Yeah, just reading off the D and what he's doing," said Vilardi, who is averaging just under 19 minutes of ice time per game. "I saw he was sliding, so once he initiated that, I knew I could sauce it in time to get it up and down for (Perfetti) there."

Vilardi was more interested in talking about the Jets play without the puck for the majority of time coming out of the Olympic break.

"It's been much better," said Vilardi, who suited up in his 342nd career NHL game on Thursday night. "I mean, other than maybe the game against Anaheim here, that was kind of a sloppy game in Boston. But even in that game against Boston, they had a few weird goals. I think we've been fairly on with our structure and playing more in five-man units, at least for me.

“I don’t know what you guys see, but I think from what I’ve seen, it looks a little bit better.”

### **TSN.ca**

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/2026/03/27/is-time-running-out-on-jets-slim-playoff-hopes/>

### ***Is time running out on the Jets' slim playoff hopes? (VIDEO)***

With how tough the Jets' remaining schedule is, TSN Director of Scouting Craig Button joins SportsCentre to assess Winnipeg's slim playoff hopes.

### **Winnipeg Sun**

[https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/nate-was-great-as-jets-lose-3-2-to-the-avs-in-nhl-action/article\\_103aa9bd-b028-42b7-994c-f57317dac365.html](https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/nate-was-great-as-jets-lose-3-2-to-the-avs-in-nhl-action/article_103aa9bd-b028-42b7-994c-f57317dac365.html)

### ***Nate was great, as Jets lose 3-2 to the Avs in NHL action***

By Gordon Anderson

Nathan MacKinnon showed why he is one of the best players on skates right now.

The Avalanche's top point-getter scored two third-period goals to pace Colorado to a 3-2 win over the Jets on Thursday night.

“(MacKinnon is) absolutely fantastic,” Mark Scheifele said. “He's an absolute horse out there. He's a guy that works on his game so tirelessly. On the other side, he's a fun guy to watch. He makes a lot of plays, a lot of little plays, even a lot of people don't notice. It's impressive to watch.”

The game was tied heading for the third period, but MacKinnon took over from there, scoring a power-play goal 13 seconds into the period, adding an even-strength goal 3:43 later when he redirected an Artturi Lehkonen pass over the left pad of Connor Hellebuyck.

The game-winner wasn't without controversy as the Jets challenged the goal for interference as MacKinnon's right skate contacted Hellebuyck's left leg, but the puck appeared to be in the net before the contact was initiated.

Minutes after the completion of the game, Jets head coach Scott Arniel was still looking for an answer to his satisfaction.

“It was a real cross-up,” Arniel said. “The referees told us he tipped the puck before his stick went into Hellebuyck's glove. The league said it was contact in the white, incidental contact on the white ice, and there is video where MacKinnon's stick goes into Hellebuyck's glove before the puck hits his stick. Three different opinions going on right now.”

Naturally, MacKinnon's opinion differed from that of the Jets' bench boss.

“The puck was in the air and I just kind of tipped it in,” the goalscorer said. “That's all I really know. I'm not sure what they were challenging.”

What the Avs got from their powerplay, namely a goal, the Jets did not. The visitors converted once on four chances.

Winnipeg went 0-for-4, failing to convert early in the second with a 1-0 lead, and misfiring before and after MacKinnon's second goal of the third period at 3:55. The team failed to register a shot on goal with their fourth chance of the night, 4:08 after Scheifele's second of the night at 9:39 trimmed the deficit to 3-2.

"Colorado was extremely aggressive," Arniel said. "They pressured us hard and they got to pucks quicker than we did. That's just something that's one of our strengths. Usually when teams get aggressive, we have our numbers, and we have bodies around, and we move it quick, and get it away from there. We weren't able to do that."

The Jets never got Hellebuyck out of the net for the extra attacker as the visitors played keep away for the final minute of the game.

"We never got it clean in their zone," Cole Perfetti said. "Even when we did get it in, they would shoot it out. It's tough for Hellebuyck to come out of the net when 50-50 battles, and when they have the MacKinnon line on the ice and Makar, they're very fast in transition."

Scheifele scored twice for the Jets (30-30-12). Hellebuyck (18-20-11) stopped 32 of 35 shots in the loss.

Jack Drury also scored for the Avalanche (48-13-10). Mackenzie Blackwood (21-8-1) stopped 22 of 24 shots for the victory.

The Jets received more favourable news on the out-of-town scoreboard as the Nashville Predators lost 4-2 to the New Jersey Devils. Regardless of the Western Conference results at the completion of action on Thursday night, the Jets will remain five points behind the Preds in the race for the second wildcard position in the Western Conference with 10 games remaining in the regular season.

The Jets begin a four-game road trip in Denver against the Avalanche on Saturday evening.

Ice Chips

Vlad Namestnikov, Jacob Bryson and Ville Heinola were scratched.

Celebrating in style

Scheifele was honoured at 12:35 of the first period when he passed Thomas Steen for the all-time Jets games played leader with 951 games. Steen played 950 regular-season NHL games from 1981 to 1995. Naturally, Scheifele celebrated the milestone at 9:55 of the first when he blasted a Kyle Connor pass over the right shoulder of a lunging Blackwood for his 33rd goal of the season, staking the Jets a 1-0 lead at the time. Scheifele also tied a career high, registering his 87th point on the goal. He scored 39 goals to go along with 48 assists last season.

"Honestly, and if you would have told me that when I started my career, I don't know if I'd believe you, but I'm obviously very blessed to get to that point," Scheifele said. "You know, I just have to thank God for keeping me healthy. And I just want to keep it going."

That takes some guts

Morgan Barron got into a fight with Josh Manson with 6:13 remaining in the game after Manson blasted him from behind and into the boards near the goal line to the right of the Avalanche net. Manson was assessed a two-minute minor for interference and five minutes for fighting. Barron was whistled for a fighting major, giving the Jets their fourth powerplay of the game and third of the period. Barron took the lion's share of the punishment as Manson hit him in the face a couple of times with a few mighty swings from his beefy fists.

Barron left the ice after the fight and did not return.

"He's in (concussion) protocol," Arniel said.