

## **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/09/19/it-would-be-awesome-to-experience-it-again>

### ***'It would be awesome to experience it again' Jets' Pearson likes his odds of capturing second Stanley Cup***

By: Ken Wiebe

The mere mention of the unadulterated elation immediately brings a smile to the face of Tanner Pearson.

Sitting in his new stall inside Hockey For All Centre, the veteran forward casually mentions his career highlight and it's as though he was immediately transformed into the time machine, landing in the heart of 2014.

Pearson was a second-year pro and had one solitary Stanley Cup playoff game on his resumé — and it came before making his regular-season debut with the Los Angeles Kings.

That would come on Nov. 14 of 2013, when he scored against Kevin Poulin of the New York Islanders.

The first real stint in the NHL lasted only six games, but when Pearson was recalled from the Manchester Monarchs of the American Hockey League on Jan. 7, he had no idea he was about to embark on a magic carpet ride.

In a matter of months, Pearson had earned the trust of the coaching staff and become a regular, riding shotgun as an integral member of "That 70s" line, with Jeff Carter and former Jets winger Tyler Toffoli.

With a solid frame and a heavy shot, Pearson provided some important secondary scoring, chipping in four goals and 12 points in 24 playoff games as the Kings came out of the Western Conference and ultimately knocked off the New York Rangers in five games.

Talk about an exciting way to wrap up a rookie season.

"It did happen fast," Pearson said during a one-on-one interview. "What was it, 25 regular season games and 24 playoff games? Kind of lucky in a sense. You don't really take it in as much as you would have liked.

"Lucky enough to play with some guys that won two years before, that helped my curve progress quicker. Just being a sponge with those guys."

Although it was a whirlwind for Pearson, he was able to recognize how special it was for veteran defenceman Robyn Regehr to capture his first Stanley Cup after a pursuit that lasted nearly two decades in the NHL.

"That's where you appreciate it a bit," said Pearson. "You see a guy like that, who has worked so hard, to see that was special."

After turning 33 last month, Pearson is still looking for that elusive second Cup.

He's appeared in 59 post-season contests — including eight with the Vegas Golden Knights last spring and a run to the Western Conference final with the Vancouver Canucks in 2020 — and his hunger to get back to the top of the mountain remains, which is part of the reason he joined the Jets on a one-year, one-way deal on July 1.

"The Presidents' Trophy winner is not a bad one to go to. At this stage of my career, I'm lucky enough to have won before. But the clock is ticking," said Pearson, who had 12 goals and 27 points in 78 games with the Golden Knights last season. "I want to get that (feeling) back again. It's the best feeling in the world. A few of us have that experience and it would be awesome to experience it again.

"You want to have a chance to do it every year. I like the position that I've come into."

Pearson, who is six-foot-one and 207 pounds, is the latest versatile forward to join the organization as a free agent.

Where he slots in is still to be determined, but he's getting early looks in training camp with Morgan Barron and Cole Koepke on what could be an energetic line that can provide some secondary scoring.

Pearson has eight double digit goal-scoring seasons and has eclipsed 20 twice.

"I don't think it's evolved that much," said Pearson, asked to describe how his game has changed over the course of his 722 games during 12 NHL seasons. "When you get older, you have projections and you score 20 goals and then you're supposed to score 20 goals every year and it doesn't happen. You go through a bit of heartache, you go through downs, you go through a couple of trades and it's definitely a learning curve.

"Last year, I zoned in on a good role. Being on a fourth line and I can kind of go anywhere. I take that to heart now and I'm looking to play anywhere and everywhere. Wherever they need me. It's going to be one of those things where you play to the best of your ability."

Pearson should be in the mix to be on the Jets' second power-play unit and there's a chance he could be added to the penalty kill as well, especially early in the season when captain Adam Lowry is still recovering from off-season hip surgery.

"Honestly, he kind of does everything," said Jets centre Mark Scheifele. "He shoots the puck well, he can play up and down the lineup. Obviously, I know him very well. I played up with his team in minor hockey a number of times, so I've known him for a very, very long time.

"Obviously I played with him in junior. He brings experience. He's won a cup. He's a guy that you can plug in anywhere and he will do well. He battles hard. Having guys like that, especially during a long season, is very crucial."

Pearson appreciates his connection with Scheifele that dates back to their minor hockey in Ontario and continued later with the Barrie Colts of the Ontario Hockey League.

"Me and Scheif have probably known each other, realistically, for about 20 years," said Pearson. "We were both lucky enough to play with each other in Barrie. Let's say that we helped each other out. It's exciting."

They also pushed each other, spending countless hours firing pucks as they worked on their respective shots.

"I did shoot a lot of pucks, in Mr. Scheifele's backyard, shooting pucks and having scoring competitions. I like to say that I took the cake back then. Not so much anymore. He may argue that one, but we'll save that for another day," said Pearson. "It was everything. Targets, posts, posts and in. You name it, we did it. Blisters galore on the hands. It was just two young guys, loving the game and wanting to get better. It's great to look back at it now. To see where (Scheifele) is, you can't be more proud."

Part of that connection included being around the late Dale Hawerchuk during those two seasons with the Colts.

"Incredible," said Pearson. "He let the offensive guys have that mind of their own. Dale showed a bunch of confidence in me. That went a long way for my career."

As Pearson prepares for this most recent Stanley Cup chase, he sees some parallels to the Kings teams he was part of in the early part of his career — citing a young core that grew up together, suffered some playoff disappointments and eventually won the big prize.

"It's kind of similar in a sense," said Pearson. "If you go back to L.A., even before I was there, it was the guys that they kind of groomed through the process. (Dustin) Brown, (Anze) Kopitar, (Trevor) Lewis, (Drew) Doughty, (Jake) Muzzin, (Alec) Martinez, all of those guys. And then, they traded for character guys along the way.

"Then you look at (things) here and it's a lot of the same, in a sense. A lot of guys have been drafted here and they're knocking (on the door)."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/09/19/encore-for-perfetti-includes-linemate-toews>

### ***Encore for Perfetti includes linemate Toews Jets rising young star thrilled to be wingman alongside Nyquist***

By: Mike McIntyre

As he returned to his hometown in Ontario this summer, Winnipeg Jets forward Cole Perfetti was surprised by how many people wanted to talk to him about the "Manitoba Miracle."

"They're all Leafs fans and for them to be asking about that and recognizing that I scored that goal, it was really cool to have that," Perfetti told the Free Press on Friday, referring to his incredible buzzer-beater last April against the St. Louis Blues that staved off playoff elimination and made headlines across the sports world.

"I guess I didn't right away recognize how big of a goal it was in terms. You go to the grocery store, you go here or wherever it is and people always... the first thing they say is what a goal. They always say they'll never forget that for the rest of their lives."

Perfetti's name is now etched in local hockey history for a dramatic moment his head coach, Scott Arniel, ranks alongside Paul Henderson's 1972 classic against the Soviet Union, Bobby Orr's airborne beauty and Sidney Crosby's golden-goal overtime winner at the 2010 Olympics.

So what might Perfetti do for an encore? How about helping usher in the return of hometown hero Jonathan Toews, who signed with the Jets this past summer and is now skating on a line with Perfetti and free-agent addition Gustav Nyquist.

"Growing up, our family, my sister was a big Chicago fan and Patrick Kane fan so I started watching the Blackhawks a lot, too. I quickly became a (Toews) fan and it's kind of funny how 15 years later, now you're playing on the same line with him," Perfetti said following the second day of training camp at Hockey For All Centre.

"Eight-year-old me probably would have been freaking out that he's playing with one of his favourite players ever. It's pretty surreal that it's come full circle like that."

Perfetti may be the young pup on his line — he's 14 years younger than Toews and 13 years younger than Nyquist — but he's also played 222 more games with the Jets than either of them. Does that make him the veteran, of sorts?

"No. No, nothing like that. Just trying to learn from them, honestly," he said.

"It's nice to play with two guys that have been around for a long time, doing it at a high level, for a really long time. And, it's exciting to play with guys that have done so much in their career. I can learn a lot from these guys and both great guys off the ice. Pretty awesome to get this opportunity."

Arniel is hoping the Perfetti-Toews-Nyquist trio can find early chemistry and provide valuable secondary scoring behind the top line of Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Gabe Vilardi. But there are plenty of unknowns, with Toews returning after a two-year, health-related hiatus and Nyquist coming off a career-worst campaign.

"With Jonathan and his experience, and the type of player that he is we wanted to put him with some real good skill and with Perfetti and Nyquist, that is what they are there," said Arniel.

"Perfetti had a great year for us last year and we need for him to continue to build."

He sure did, setting career highs for points (50), assists (32) and games played (82) last year, and he's a prime candidate to help the Jets offset the off-season loss of Nikolaj Ehlers by taking another big step forward.

"He had a breakout year last year. Being with those guys, I have tried to figure out who the shooter was and who the passer was and I am starting to figure out that Cole looks like he is going to be the shooter," said Arniel.

"He is getting a chance and it is going to be a different look. With Ehlers being there last year there was an extreme speed level to it. But Gus has great visions and great hands, a good playmaker, and Jonathan has the drive, the ability to get to the net front to make those plays in close. I am excited to see those guys."

Perfetti is also likely to get a shot at filling Ehlers's spot on the top power-play unit alongside Scheifele, Connor, Vilardi and Josh Morrissey.

"Losing Nikky, it hurts. But everyone's gotta take another step in the right direction and level up their game and that's exactly what my mindset was all summer," he said.

"There's going to be a hole to fill there and no one's going to be able to fill exactly what Nikky did by themselves because he was a great player and what he could do was special. As a line, for us, we're focused on being the best second line going out there and working together."

Nyquist was thrilled to learn he'd get the chance to skate with one of the game's brightest young stars in Perfetti and one of the most decorated players in NHL history in Toews.

"I think the more reps you get, the better it is. In practice, scrimmages, pre-season. And talking to each other between shifts and just kind of getting to know each other's tendencies," said Nyquist, who inked a one-year deal with Winnipeg that pays him US\$3.25 million.

The Swedish winger dipped to just 28 points last season with the Nashville Predators and Minnesota Wild — a sharp drop from his career-high 75 the year before.

"I think there was a lot of factors but, unfortunately, that was the reality of the season that we had where a lot of guys couldn't find their way, underperformed and never seemed to click for various reasons," said Nyquist.

"I still feel I am the same player I was two years ago and to come in here and get a fresh start and I am excited to be playing with the two guys I am playing with — is a great opportunity for me, too. Hopefully we can start in a good way and keep it rolling."

Perfetti is counting on it.

"It will be hard to top (the Manitoba Miracle) but I'm hoping we can do something special this year," he said.

### **Winnipeg Sun**

[https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/jets-nyquist-sees-winnipeg-as-chance-to-chase-elusive-stanley-cup?utm\\_source=winnipeg-jets](https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/jets-nyquist-sees-winnipeg-as-chance-to-chase-elusive-stanley-cup?utm_source=winnipeg-jets)

### ***Jets' Nyquist sees Winnipeg as chance to chase elusive Stanley Cup***

By Gordon Anderson

When Gustav Nyquist signed with the Jets more than 10 weeks ago, his reasons were obvious.

Jets' Nyquist sees Winnipeg as chance to chase elusive Stanley Cup

The Jets signed the 36-year-old Swedish forward to a one-year deal worth US \$3.25 million back in early July.

On Friday, Nyquist skated on a line with Jonathan Toews and Cole Perfetti. The way things are shaping up early in camp, he is a like-for-like replacement for the departed Nikolaj Ehlers on this newly created second line.

And while Nyquist doesn't have the same skill set as Ehlers — the electric speed being the primary asset missing — head coach Scott Arniel says the ex-Nashville Predator can do a number of things well and should complement the newly formed trio.

"I've seen him for a number of years," Arniel said. "There's an elite set of skills there. He's still a good player, I know he's a little bit older. But at the end of the day he's played for some good coaches, I've seen him be a tremendous penalty killer. I've seen him play the point on the power play in Nashville. He's kind of a guy who can play in a lot of situations, he's real responsible."

Between now and opening night on Oct. 9 against the Dallas Stars, the name of the game is rapport and chemistry with his linemates and his team.

"The guys have been great and everyone around the organization has been great," Nyquist said. "It has been a good experience so far. Almost been here a week now and trying to take in as much as possible, get to know the guys in the room and learn a little bit every day."

Two seasons ago Nyquist scored 23 goals and added 52 assists in 81 games with the Predators. Last season his offensive production decreased significantly as he scored nine goals and added a dozen assists in 57 games before he was shipped to the Minnesota Wild for a second-round pick in 2026. He scored two goals and chipped in with five assists in 25 games with the Wild.

"Last year a lot of different things happened, and it was kind of a weird season for a lot of the guys in Nashville. It is hard to point a finger (at) what went wrong," Nyquist said. "I think there were a lot of factors, but unfortunately that was the reality of the season we had where a lot of guys couldn't find their way, underperformed and never seemed to click."

"What happened last year, I have no idea, he'd have more of an answer for that," Arniel added. "I just hope he took his year off and now he's coming back. But he's excited to be here, he knows he's coming to a good hockey team."

The Halmstad, Swe., native believes his offensive production is still within his capability.

"I still feel I am the same player I was two years ago, and to come in here and get a fresh start, I am excited to be playing with the two guys I am playing with," Nyquist said. "This is a great opportunity. Hopefully, we can start in a good way and keep it rolling."

But the forward says he won't abandon his defensive responsibilities for better finishing skills in the offensive zone.

"A big thing they've stressed in the video we've watched so far, they've kind of showed that," Nyquist said about the team's commitment to a defensive way of thinking. "I'm an offensive guy, but I kind of pride myself on playing solid defence as well and doing the little things right. (If you) do good things defensively, that will lead to offence."

Since it seems to be common practice early on in Toews's tenure with the hometown team, Nyquist was asked for a memory, pleasant or otherwise, about his new centre.

Once upon a time the two were Western Conference foes before the Wings moved to the Eastern Conference to start the 2013-14 campaign.

“Just getting into the league, my first year that I spent with Detroit we had a lot of good matchups with Chicago, and he was just a good player,” he said. “We had a good series against them in 2013, and I remember they came back, down 3-1 and won the series in overtime and went on to win the Stanley Cup. That is something that still stings a little bit.”

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/the-evolution-of-winnipeg-jets-forward-cole-perfetti>

### ***The evolution of Winnipeg Jets forward Cole Perfetti***

By Gordon Anderson

Jets forward Cole Perfetti spent his summer prepping for life without Nikolaj Ehlers.

“Everyone must take another step in the right direction and level up their game and that’s exactly what my mindset was,” Perfetti said of his off-season. “There’s going to be a hole to fill, and no one’s going to be able to fill exactly what Nikolaj did by himself because he was a great player and what he could do was special.”

“Perfetti thinks the game, a good, young player who is starting to evolve,” Jets head coach Scott Arniel said. “He had a great year for us last year and we need for him to continue to build.”

Ehlers signed with the Hurricanes on July 3, accepting a six-year deal worth US \$51 million.

Perfetti, a former Saginaw Spirit forward, is fresh off a career-high 50-point campaign. His previous top offensive output was 38, set two seasons ago. Perfetti scored 18 goals and added 32 assists, helping the Jets win the Presidents’ Trophy as regular-season champs with 56 victories.

The coaching staff put Perfetti and the members of Group 2 through up-tempo defensive zone coverage drills during training camp at the Hockey For All Centre on Friday morning.

Arniel says the 23-year-old is going to get a shot at increasing his offensive numbers, penciling the young forward temporarily into the top power-play unit with Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele.

Chances are good Perfetti will be looking to make a lasting impression on the top unit when the Jets open the exhibition season against the Minnesota Wild on Sunday. Puck drop is 4 p.m. at the Canada Life Centre.

The Whitby, Ont., native scored 11 goals on the man-advantage last season.

“We’re going to try some guys,” Arniel said. “Perfetti played there lots last year when Nikolaj was out. He’s a guy that’s been good at it, whether it’s on the first unit or second unit. I’m not saying it’s going to be him, but he’s probably going to get the early looks at it.”

On Friday, Perfetti was on a line with free agent acquisitions Jonathan Toews and Gustav Nyquist. Again, expect Perfetti to make his debut with this trio in their pre-season opener on Sunday.

“As a line, for us, we’re focused on being the best second line, going out there and working together,” Perfetti said. “For me personally there’s a hole to fill and I’m aware of that. I know that it’s big shoes to fill but I’m ready to try to fill that task and evolve my game and take the confidence from last year, the second half of last year and the playoffs, and use that as fuel and confidence for myself. I look forward to it.”

The speedy forward gained confidence, and a few followers, for his last-second, game-tying goal in Game 7 against the St. Louis Blues.

“I don’t really remember the goal because I think that I was just so excited and kind of blacking out in the emotion of everything, I didn’t really remember exactly how it felt,” he said. “But rewatching it kind of reminded me. ‘Yeah, lots of people back home’ ... It was really cool to go back into the Durham region outside of Toronto and have people ask about it. I was just lucky to be in that opportunity and spot. And fortunate that it went in and that we got to extend our season.”

Arniel says the goal ranks alongside the Paul Henderson goal in the 1972 Summit Series against the Soviet Union.

“I’ve got some goals in my head, the ’72 Paul Henderson, the Golden Goal with Crosby, Bobby Orr ... for me, in my time, that’s right near the very top,” the coach said. “That goal, the timing of it and all that, it obviously gave a chance to go and win that in overtime.”

### **Global Winnipeg**

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11436396/winnipeg-jets-new-season-analysis-shannon/>

### ***ANALYSIS: Jets may not match last season’s highs, but might be closer to ultimate goal***

By John Shannon CJOB

There’s a stark reality about how good last season was for the Winnipeg Jets.

The Presidents’ Trophy winners with 116 points. Central Division champions. The NHL’s lowest goals against. The league’s best power play. Career years for Kyle Connor, Mark Scheifele and Gabriel Vilardi.

It was as close to a perfect season as one could want — minus the second-round departure, of course.

But let’s just look at the first 82 games for now. It will be difficult to replicate. With all due respect, to expect the same just might not be realistic. It is a sports version of over-promising and under-delivering.

I think it’s probably fair to suggest the Jets will not get off to the same great start they did last year. Remember, it began 15-1 for Scott Arniel’s team.

As well, there was the 11-game winning streak before and after the 4 Nations Face-off that really cemented first place in the division for the team. To expect success like that might be a stretch.

And yet, this team just might be better than last season. Jonathan Toews and Gustav Nyquist make this team even deeper. Dylan Samberg is a year older and wiser, and the Jets get a full season of Luke Schenn on defence.

So here's the reality of the '25-26 Jets: They might not have 56 wins and 116 points and win the division. The power play might not be the league's best. They might lose more than seven times in regulation at home and Connor Hellebuyck might not win a ton of silverware — but they might be closer to a championship than last year's team.

Fans will just have to be patient as the season unfolds.