

***THREE THINGS: Stanley scores again, Jets lose in OT  
Stanley scores for the third time in four games but Jets lose 3-2 in OT***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – Brady Tkachuk scored 2:11 into overtime to give the Ottawa Senators a 3-2 win over the Winnipeg Jets at Canada Life Centre. The Jets got goals from Neal Pionk and Logan Stanley and Connor Hellebuyck was brilliant with 28 saves. The Jets went 1-2-1 on the four-game homestand and are 15-15-2 as they head out onto the road for three critical Central Division games starting with St. Louis on Wednesday.

***DOING IT AGAIN***

Jets head coach Scott Arniel said after the win over Washington on Saturday that was one of the best, most complete games of the year for his group. That being said, it has to happen again in order for Winnipeg to get back into a playoff spot. Arniel said that it took the Jets 15 minutes to get going and that they have to find a way to finish things off in the third period with a 2-1 lead. Winnipeg also had two great scoring chances in overtime by Linus Ullmark shut the door. Neal Pionk liked how his team stayed in it throughout the night.

"I didn't think our execution was great in the first start of the first period, kind of a theme that continued throughout the game," said Pionk.

"I thought we had good spurts, good spurts in the second. Played well enough to win. Just didn't get it done."

***BAD BOUNCE***

The Jets had the lead in the third period and had been defending very well for the most part and got some great goaltending from Hellebuyck. The Sens had their goaltender pulled for the extra attacker and Jake Sanderson's shot went off Mark Scheifele's stick and past Hellebuyck for the tying goal at 18:06.

"This is something that we have to find a way at the very end -- either to get that third goal or, the other side of it is not to allow the 6-on-5 goal against," said Scott Arniel.

"We've got to find a way, however that is. If that's making the next play so that it gets out of the zone, if that's blocking a shot, whatever it is, those are the things where you need those... We need two points. We need them bad."

***O FROM THE D***

The Jets were down 1-0 in the second period before their defence brought some offence to the game. First at 15:37, Kyle Connor did a great job of drawing two defenders towards him before sending the puck to Neal Pionk and his slap shot got past Linus Ullmark for his second of the season and first goal since November 18.

Everything that Logan Stanley is touching these days is turning into gold and that magic continued at 18:35 of the second. Morgan Barron spotted Stanley coming into the offensive zone and hit the defenceman in stride and Stanley ripped a wrist shot by Ullmark for the first

lead of the night for Winnipeg. It marked the first time Stanley has scored in back-to-back games in his career and now has three goals in his last four. The last time Stanley scored in back-to-back games was in January of 2018 when he was with the Kitchener Rangers of the OHL.

## **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/ottawa-senators-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-december-15-2025>

### ***Senators rally late, defeat Jets on Tkachuk's OT goal Forward wins it at 2:11 after Sanderson ties it late in 3rd; Winnipeg has lost 10 of 13***

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Tim Stutzle had three assists, including setting up Brady Tkachuk for the game-winning goal at 2:11 of overtime, and the Ottawa Senators rallied late for a 3-2 win against the Winnipeg Jets at Canada Life Centre on Monday.

"That was a great win," Ottawa coach Travis Green said. "They kind of had us on our heels, and I loved how we stuck with it in the third period. I've been saying it a lot, we've liked the way we've played as of late, and it's not easy to stick with your game when you're not getting the wins. You know you're playing decently, so I was happy with what we did."

Tkachuk won with a one-timer from the right circle off a pass from Stutzle, who was sprung on a 2-on-1 by a stretch feed from Jake Sanderson.

"It's great play by [Sanderson] to read that we had a 2-on-1, and a great pass by 'Timmy,'" Tkachuk said. "It's been a grind to a certain extent, and yeah, I'm just really happy with the two points at the end of the day."

Sanderson was the player who had forced overtime for the Senators, tying the game 2-2 at 18:06 of the third period with a point shot that deflected in off the stick of Jets forward Mark Scheifele.

"I mean, I think we lead the league in losses by one goal, and we made an emphasis at 6-on-5 that we weren't going to get denied," Tkachuk said. "So I mean, it took a little puck luck, but I think we're due for that."

Nick Cousins also scored, and Linus Ullmark made 23 saves for the Senators (15-13-4), who concluded a three-game road trip 2-1-0.

"I really liked our third period," Cousins said. "I thought it could have been easy just for us to mail it in with the way things have been going for us, but we dug in in the third, played a really good road third period, and got one with the goalie pulled. So, that was huge. ... Great road trip for us."

Neal Pionk and Logan Stanley scored for the Jets (15-15-2), who have lost four of five (1-3-1) and 10 of their past 13 (3-8-2). Connor Hellebuyck made 28 saves.

"That is a game that should have been won by us," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "At the end of the day, these are the games you've got to learn to win. ... We've got to find a way,

however that is. If that's making the next play so that it gets out of the zone, if that's blocking a shot, whatever it is, those are the things [we need to do]. We need two points. We need them bad."

Cousins gave the Senators a 1-0 lead at 10:47 of the second period. Kurtis MacDermid sent a cross-ice pass to Cousins, who skated all alone down the right wing before scoring with a shot that went in off the blocker of Hellebuyck.

The assist was the first point of the season for MacDermid, who was playing in his 300th NHL game.

"If you watch the play, I think the bench was probably happier than [MacDermid] was," Cousins said. "So, great play by him. He kind of did all the work, I was just fortunate enough to be on the receiving end of the pass. And then, obviously, lucky to go in."

"[MacDermid] brings, I mean, so much energy. The boys absolutely love him in the room. He's a great teammate, and he sticks up for everybody when he has to."

Pionk tied it 1-1 at 15:37 with a one-timer from above the circles that fluttered through traffic.

"I didn't think our execution was great at the start of the first period, kind of a theme that continued throughout the game," Pionk said. "I thought we had good spurts, good spurts in the second. (We) played well enough to win, just didn't get it done."

Stanley put the Jets in front 2-1 at 18:35, scoring short side under Ullmark's blocker with a wrist shot on a rush. It was Stanley's sixth goal in 32 games this season. He scored only five goals in his first five NHL seasons (202 games).

"We did a lot of good things tonight," Stanley said. "Their goalie made some great saves. Mistakes are going to happen in a game, and two of them ended up in the back of our net. (It's) kind of been a theme right now, but (this was) a game that I think we should have won."

*NOTES:* Stutzle extended his multipoint streak to four games (four goals, five assists). ... Jets forward Kyle Connor had the primary assist on Pionk's goal to extend his point streak to nine games (four goals, nine assists).

### **Canadian Press**

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/12/16/winnipeg-jets-ottawa-senators-overtime-winning-goal/>

### ***Brady Tkachuk Thrilled to Score OT Winner in City Full of Memories***

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG — There was one group of Winnipeg fans who were really happy when Brady Tkachuk scored the Ottawa Senators' winner at 2:11 of overtime against the Winnipeg Jets on Monday.

Tim Stutzle, with his third assist of the game, sent the puck across to Tkachuk on a two-on-one and he put a one-timer past Connor Hellebuyck.

Tkachuk had family in the stands, including his grandfather on his mother's side.

"It's nice to play in front of my grandpa, family, and it's just nice to be here," he said.

"I think there's a lot of memories here with our family, my dad, and my grandpa and my mom being from here. So yeah, I just always get excited playing here."

Tkachuk's father, Keith, was a star with the original Jets franchise.

The goal was Tkachuk's second of the season. He missed 20 games because of an Oct. 13 thumb injury and returned Nov. 28. He also has nine assists.

"It's been a grind to a certain extent," he said. "And yeah, I'm just really happy with the two points at the end of the day."

Nick Cousins also scored and Jake Sanderson had a goal and assist for the Senators (15-13-4).

Linus Ullmark stopped 23 shots for Ottawa, which is 2-4-0 in its last six games.

"They kind of had us on our heels and I loved how we stuck with it in the third period," Senators head coach Travis Green said.

"I've been saying it a lot. We've liked the way we've played as of late, and it's not easy to stick with your game when you're not getting the wins. You know you're playing decently, so I was happy with what we did."

Defencemen Neal Pionk and Logan Stanley scored for the Jets (15-15-2).

Hellebuyck made 28 saves in his second game back from injury for Winnipeg, which is 1-3-1 in its last five games.

After no scoring in the first period, Cousins made it 1-0 at 10:47 of the second. Winnipeg followed up with goals from Pionk and Stanley late in the frame.

With Ullmark pulled for the extra attacker, Sanderson pushed it to overtime when his shot went off Jets centre Mark Scheifele's stick with 1:54 left in the third.

Having success from a comeback was a good feeling, especially with a late goal, Tkachuk said.

"I think we lead the league in losses by one goal, and we made an emphasis at six-on-five that we weren't gonna get denied," he said. "So I mean, it took a little puck luck, but I think we're due for that."

The Senators lost 3-2 to Minnesota last Saturday when Joel Eriksson Ek scored with 24 seconds left in the third period.

Jets head coach Scott Arniel thought his team let a victory slip away.

"These are the games you've got to learn to win. You've got to learn to win," he said.

"This is something that we have to find a way at the very end. Either to get that third goal or, the other side of it is not to allow the six-on-five goal against. We've got to find a way, however that is."

Stanley, whose sixth goal of the season surpassed the total of five goals he had in his first five NHL seasons, agreed with Arniel's assessment.

"It was a good effort. Very winnable hockey game that we found a way to lose," he said.

Winnipeg went 1-2-1 during its four-game homestand and now has to seek some momentum on a three-game road trip that begins Wednesday against the St. Louis Blues.

"We're going to have to just go into St. Louis and we're going to have to make sure we gain some points," Arniel said.

"We didn't do the job here at home so we're going to have to make sure that we go out on the road and get some."

#### ***END OF DUBIOUS STREAK***

If there was one bright spot for Winnipeg, it's that it didn't allow a power-play goal after surrendering at least one in eight consecutive games.

The Senators were 0-for-3 with the man advantage and the Jets went 0-for-2.

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/toews-says-jets-teammate-scheifele-should-wear-maple-leaf-in-milan/>

#### ***Toews says Jets teammate Scheifele should wear Maple Leaf in Milan***

By Judy Owen, Canadian Press

Jonathan Toews always remembers how excited and proud he felt when he was named to Canada's 2010 Olympic team.

It's a feeling the Winnipeg Jets forward wants teammate Mark Scheifele to experience later this month.

"I think he's one of those guys that maybe hasn't gotten his due and had the chance to represent Canada at that level," Toews recently said.

"The best-on-best hasn't happened in a long time, but he's very deserving to be able to represent Canada and be at the Olympics."

NHLers haven't played in an Olympic Games since Canada won gold in Sochi in 2014, which was Toews's second appearance in the elite competition.

Canada's roster for the Games in Italy will be announced New Year's Eve, with the men's competition starting Feb. 11.

Scheifele is trying not to dwell on whether he's selected.

"It's going to pop into your mind every once in a while, but it's a matter of you letting it stress you out or letting it motivate you," he said.

The 32-year-old centre from Kitchener, Ont., entered Monday's home game against the Ottawa Senators with 40 points (16 goals, 24 assists) in 31 games this season.

Scheifele was left off the roster for last February's 4 Nations Face-Off, which ended with a gold-medal victory for Canada over the United States.

He admitted that added motivation heading into this season with the Olympic carrot dangling for NHLers.

"I wanted to be on that team, but it's not what I can control," Scheifele said of the 4 Nations squad.

"That's in the past and all I can do is focus on the future and keep working hard at my game and trying to get wins for the Winnipeg Jets and playing my best.

"He's feeling good about his game, despite the Jets being 15-15-1 before playing the Senators.

Scheifele was invited to Hockey Canada's Olympic orientation camp in August.

Six players have already been named to Team Canada: Sidney Crosby, Nathan MacKinnon, Cale Makar, Connor McDavid, Brayden Point and Sam Reinhart.

Winnipeg head coach Scott Arniel said Scheifele, who's in his 13th full-time NHL season, should get the honour to join them.

"I think he's done everything possible to be on that team, and I think that he should be on that team," Arniel said.

"I know I'm maybe a little biased, but at the end of the day his play with the puck, all those different things, has been really good, really, really good."

Scheifele's responsibilities without the puck are solid, too.

"When you have four lines of great players like that, it's more about sort of (penalty kill, power play), faceoffs, those type of things," Arniel said of the Olympic squad.

"I think that when you have that type of thing, he can fit into that line and into those roles. I think he can do whatever's needed."

Toews was on a fourth line with Brenden Morrow, Mike Richards and a rotating Patrice Bergeron in 2010. Crosby scored the overtime gold-medal winning goal against the U.S., but Toews led Canada in scoring at the tournament with one goal and seven assists.

"We had kind of a grinding fourth line, where we were checking against other teams' top lines," said Toews, who at the time was in his third season with the Chicago Blackhawks.

"We were doing a good job so we kind of got some confidence from the coaching staff and got some more ice time and we were able to create some offence at the same time."

He believes Scheifele has the skillset for any role.

"There's no doubt that he's one of the elite players in the league," Toews said. "To play in one of those (top) six positions, I don't see why he can't do that.

"But if you're in the bottom six, there's maybe some more defensive responsibilities that come with it and I think he'll fit in great in those situations as well."

Scheifele is willing to do whatever he's asked.

"If I were to make the team, I'm ready to play any role," he said. "We're all great players, whether you're thrust in an offensive role, defensive role, whatever it is, you'll do anything to be on that team and anything to win."

The Jets have other Olympic hopefuls, including Calgary-born defenceman Josh Morrissey and Americans Kyle Connor and goalie Connor Hellebuyck.

Morrissey played on Canada's 4 Nations squad and is crossing his fingers he and Scheifele are skating together in Milan.

"I believe he's got the ability to adapt. He's got such a great hockey mind and a great skillset," Morrissey said of Scheifele.

"He's a big guy, he's great on the wall, so all the different variables. You've seen him (penalty killing) this year and doing a really good job winning key faceoffs. It's such a tough team to make, the hardest team that any of us will try out for.

"I just really hope we have the chance to be there together. It would be amazing."

### **Global Winnipeg**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/13/jets-offence-comes-back-to-life-in-hellebuycks-return>

### ***Tkachuk scores OT winner as Senators rally past Winnipeg Jets 3-2***

By Christian Aumell Global News

Playing in their final home game before the holiday break, the Winnipeg Jets were hoping to give their fans an early Christmas gift.

Instead, they couldn't hold onto a late lead, falling to the Ottawa Senators 3-2 in overtime Monday night.

Ottawa had the best looks to score early in the game, earning a pair of power plays but could not convert. Lightly-used fourth liner Kurtis MacDermid nearly scored as well when his slap shot beat Connor Hellebuyck but rang off the iron.

Winnipeg nearly got on the board first when Nino Niederreiter took a stab at a loose puck near the Ottawa crease but Linus Ullmark made a sprawling pad save to keep it out.

The Jets also failed on a power play look late in the first as both teams finished the opening period with seven shots on goal.

The parade to the penalty box continued in the second as both teams took penalties in the opening five minutes but neither side could generate much of anything on the man advantage.

The game opened up a bit near the midway point of the period with the teams going up and down the ice, each having a decent chance or two before the Senators opened the scoring at the 10:47 mark.

Winnipeg's top line lost control of the puck in the Ottawa end as Josh Morrissey went off for a change. MacDermid carried the puck into the Winnipeg end as Luke Schenn came off the bench and into the play, cutting toward MacDermid.

Mark Scheifele also skated in that direction, but Neal Pionk was already there, so with three players on one side of the ice, Nick Cousins found himself wide open on the other side. MacDermid hit him with a pass and Cousins made no mistake, trickling a shot through Hellebuyck for his fifth of the season.

Just under five minutes later, the Jets answered. After a long shift in the Ottawa end, Kyle Connor fed Neal Pionk at the point for a one-timer. Pionk's shot was a knuckler, taking a dive and bouncing off the ice en route to the net, fluttering past a fooled Ullmark for his second of the season.

Winnipeg's blue line continued to supply the offence with 1:25 to go in the second. Ottawa turned the puck over in the neutral zone thanks to a hit by Morgan Barron, allowing Gabriel Vilardi to take the puck into the Senators' end. He gave it to Barron as he skated into the zone, who in turn slipped it across to Logan Stanley, jumping up into the play.

He beat Ullmark with a wrister (that probably should have been stopped) to give the Jets their first lead of the night.

For Stanley, it was the continuation of a stunning goal-scoring binge, a third goal in his last four games and a sixth this season after scoring no more than one in each of his first five seasons in the NHL. It also moved him into a tie (with three forwards) for fourth on the team in goals scored this season.

Ottawa wound up outshooting Winnipeg 12-10 in the second but the Jets took the 2-1 lead into the third.

Tim Stutzle nearly tied the game in the third when he sent a backhand on net but it glanced off the shaft of Hellebuyck's stick and careened into the corner.

Winnipeg did a good job of minimizing chances for the Senators before Ottawa pulled Ullmark with 2:40 on the clock, and with 1:54 left on the clock, the Sens drew level.

The Jets tried and failed to clear the puck, with Stutzle taking the failed clear and finding Jake Sanderson in the middle of the ice at the point. He created some space for himself with a nice shot fake before sending a shot on goal.



Mark Scheifele, standing outside of the shooting lane, stuck his stick in the air to try and knock it down. Instead, the shot knocked the stick of Scheifele out of his hands and the deflection caused the puck to change directions and flutter past Hellebuyck to tie the game.

Both teams had great chances in the opening minute of overtime, with the best coming off the stick on Connor on a 2-on-1 with Scheifele but Ullmark made a fantastic save.

That proved large because, later in the extra session, Sanderson grabbed the puck in his own end and sent a pass off the boards that sprung a 2-on-1. Stutzle took the pass, skated into the Winnipeg end and sent a perfect feed across to Brady Tkachuk that the Ottawa captain blasted past Hellebuyck to win the game.

Hellebuyck got saddled with the loss, making 28 saves in defeat while Ullmark stopped 23 shots in victory.

The Jets still have not won back-to-back games since beating the Flames Nov. 15 and the Blue Jackets Nov. 18.

Winnipeg will now head out on a three-game road trip that begins in St. Louis on Wednesday. Pregame coverage on 680 CJOB begins just after 5 p.m with the puck dropping just after 7 p.m.

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/13/jets-get-hellebump-from-return-of-mvp-goaltender>

#### ***Late surge sends Sens past Jets Winnable game slips away as Winnipeg finds way to lose***

By: Mike McIntyre

Nobody said it was going to be easy. The long road back to NHL relevancy hit an early detour Monday night for the Winnipeg Jets.

A 2-1 lead with less than two minutes to play in regulation turned into a 3-2 overtime defeat to the Ottawa Senators, resulting in a costly lost point for a Winnipeg team that already finds itself trying to play catch-up.

“That is a game that should have been won by us,” said a clearly unhappy coach Scott Arniel.

“At the end of the day, these are the games you’ve got to learn to win. We’ve got to find a way, however that is. If that’s making the next play so that it gets out of the zone, if that’s blocking a shot, whatever it is. We need two points. We need them bad.”

The Jets were coming off their best game of the year, a dominant 5-1 victory over the Washington Capitals which they hoped would be the spark for a lengthy run of sustained success.

And yet...

“Very winnable hockey game that we found a way to lose,” bemoaned defenceman Logan Stanley. “Mistakes are going to happen in a game, and two of them ended up in the back of our net. Kind of been a theme right now. But a game that I think we should have won.”

Winnipeg falls to 15-15-2 on the year. Ottawa improves to 15-13-4.

*WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED?* The Jets appeared to be in control, even when Ottawa pulled goaltender Linus Ullmark for an extra attacker with just under three minutes to play. They had been defending well, keeping most shots to the outside and making life fairly routine for Connor Hellebuyck.

As often is the case in these situations, a mistake proved critical. Jets forward Kyle Connor had an opportunity to clear the puck out of his zone but failed to do so. Just seconds later, the game was tied. A shot by Senators defenceman Jake Sanderson deflected off Winnipeg centre Mark Scheifele, beating a surprised Hellebuyck.

It was a whole new hockey game with 1:54 left on the clock.

Then, in the ensuing three-on-three session, Connor had a glorious chance to win it — and score career goal No. 300 in the process — but his one-timer off a Scheifele pass was stopped by Ottawa goaltender Linus Ullmark.

Sure enough, the Senators would make the Jets pay for that missed opportunity, with Brady Tkachuk burying a Tim Stutzle feed at 2:11 of the extra frame.

Game, set, match.

“I didn’t think our execution was great in the first (part) of the first period, kind of a theme that continued throughout the game,” said defenceman Neal Pionk.

“I thought we had good spurts, good spurts in the second. Played well enough to win. Just didn’t get it done.”

*RIGHT TO THE POINT:* Winnipeg began the night with 12 goals from defencemen in the first 31 games of the year, a number which Arniel would like to see increase.

The modern NHL game means coming in waves of four or even five players at a time, with blue-liners jumping into the rush to add additional support and threats. Although taking care of their own end will always be priority No. 1, Winnipeg’s rear-guards have the green light to go when opportunity presents itself.

That was certainly the case against Ottawa.

After falling behind 1-0 midway through the second period off a goal from Senators forward Nick Cousins — the Jets somehow failed to cover the entire left side of the ice — the club seemingly hit the activation button.

First up was Pionk, who took a pass from Connor and then found a lane through traffic to beat a screened Ullmark at 15:37 of the middle frame. It was the second goal of the year for Pionk, who matched his career high a season ago with 10.

Then came Stanley, who simply can't be stopped. The big man, who scored exactly one goal per season in each of his first five campaigns, ripped home his sixth of this year at 18:35. It's his third snipe in the past four games.

The only Winnipeg players who have lit the lamp more than Stanley through 32 games? The top line trio of Scheifele (16), Gabe Vilardi (16) and Connor (15). That is rather remarkable, while also serving as an indictment over some of the Jets' secondary scoring woes.

"I'd like for there to be a few more forwards added into that, but when your D can get involved, it's a big bonus," said Arniel.

"I think we were over 10, 11, 12 shots from our back end. That's important. That puts some strain on the opposition and we had some good zone time because our D were active. Our D were getting themselves in position to either get shots or to make the next plays."

*KEY PLAY:* While the Connor failed clear, the Sanderson tipped shot and the Ullmark overtime save would all be worthy contenders, the Tkachuk ripper to the top shelf was the ultimate difference. It's his second goal of the year, and his first since recently returning from a thumb injury that cost him 20 games.

As an added bonus? His grandfather, who lives in Winnipeg, was at the rink to witness it:

"There's a lot of memories here with our family, my dad (Jets 1.0 forward Keith Tkachuk), and my grandpa and my mom being from here. I just always get excited playing here," he said.

#### *THREE STARS:*

1. Sens C Tim Stutzle: 3A
2. Sens D Jake Sanderson: 1G, 1A
3. Jets F Morgan Barron: 1 A

*EXTRA, EXTRA:* Winnipeg had given up a power play goal in eight consecutive games but finally put a stop to that dubious streak, going three-for-three while shorthanded. The Jets failed to click on two chances of their own.

Hellebuyck, playing his second game since returning from a three-week injury absence, stopped 28 of 31 shots. Ullmark turned aside 23 of 25 pucks that came his way.

Defencemen Colin Miller and Haydn Fleury and forward Tanner Pearson were Winnipeg's scratches.

A crowd of 13,566 took in the game, which is below the season average of 14,071. Capacity at the downtown rink is 15,225.

Prior to puck drop, the Jets announced Gimli is the winner of their "Town Takeover" contest. The Interlake community will host a full day of events on March 19 including Project 11 mental-wellness sessions at local schools, an on-ice session for local minor hockey teams featuring team alumni and a watch party for Winnipeg's game in Boston.

The Jets now hit the road for the final three games before the Christmas break, starting Wednesday night in St. Louis. They'll also visit Colorado on Friday and Utah on Sunday.

"We get three Central Division opponents here. We're going to have to just go into St. Louis and we're going to have to make sure we gain some points," said Arniel.

"We didn't do the job here at home so we're going to have to make sure that we go out on the road and get some."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/15/barron-back-up-to-speed>

***Barron back up to speed  
Jets forward returns to form after injury***

By: Ken Wiebe

The motor never stops running for Morgan Barron.

Whether he's been used at centre or shifted back to the wing, the Winnipeg Jets forward is impossible to ignore, given his combination of size, speed and strength.

For a Jets team looking for more secondary scoring, Barron is a prime candidate to take the leap forward.

After enduring a stretch that included no goals and two assists in 19 games, Barron notched goals against the Washington Capitals and Boston Bruins this week to get back on track — moving to five for the season and back on pace to eclipse the career-high of 11 he produced during the 2023-24 season.

"I've really watched him flourish as a player," said Jets captain Adam Lowry. "He's taken a really big step forward. Earlier on in the year, he was driving the bus offensively, with that depth scoring. He was a key cog on the penalty kill, he was winning faceoffs. Then, he got hurt."

After dealing with the mid-body injury he suffered late in the game against the Pittsburgh Penguins on Nov. 1, Barron was sidelined for six games before getting back into action.

"He's come back and done a really good job of having a positive impact on our lineup, whether he's at centre or the wing," said Lowry. "He's a handful down low and he does such a good job of skating the puck through the neutral zone. When he gets the puck below the goal line, he's really tough to get it off of."

"He protects the puck and some of that is now understanding that he can make more plays and he can take pucks to the net. He has that confidence that he's an impact player on this team and in this league. Sometimes it takes a few years to get that."

"He has that confidence that he's an impact player on this team and in this league."

On this subject, Lowry has ample experience, having gone from a fourth line player trying to find his way to growing into someone that is relied upon to often go out against the other team's most skilled players, while being counted on to chip in offensively.

"You have to build the coach's trust, you have to find your role," said Lowry. "If you're playing limited minutes, you don't want to make a mistake that's going to cut those minutes even more."

He's done a good job of finding that balance, but now really trying to push to continue getting better."

Now in his fifth season with the Jets after coming over in a trade with the New York Rangers, Barron continues to show improvement on a number of fronts.

"He's a big man. The thing about (Barron) is he can move, he can really put pressure on the opposition," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. "The other side is he does a good job of getting back. His confidence at both ends of the rink is really growing. His detail in his game has gotten a lot better.

"He's taking advantage of the opportunities that have been put in front of him because of the injuries, and it's allowed him to have a real good season."

Barron, 27, started the campaign as the fourth-line centre and it's a job he's been able to excel at.

But with the Jets searching for optimal combinations, specifically on Lowry's checking line, Arniel decided to put Barron and Alex Iafallo together in Saturday's game against the Capitals.

Barron used his speed to drive to the slot and redirected a perfect Lowry pass on his backhand to put the Jets up 2-0.

"What I see when Morgan is playing well is that he's a great skater, he plays in straight lines, he holds onto the puck and he gets to the net."

"He starts at the hash marks (in the defensive zone) and he wins a race," said Lowry. "What I see when Morgan is playing well is that he's a great skater, he plays in straight lines, he holds onto the puck and he gets to the net."

Barron was in the slot when Iafallo tried to find him for another tip-in that caromed into the net off the stick of Capitals centre Justin Sourdif before Barron could get a piece of it.

The other layer to the Lowry line is that they were used in a shutdown role against Aliaksei Protas, Tom Wilson and Sourdif, the big and strong second line of the Capitals that generated very little offence against the Jets.

Part of that had to do with the stifling defensive effort, but Lowry's line also did an excellent job of forcing the Capitals to defend, thanks to some extended cycling shifts in the offensive zone.

"I finally got them in a shutdown role," said Arniel. "Adam, he kind of thrives on that and knows what his assignment is and who he's going up against all night. We'll have to do that again tonight. But at the end of the day, they know what they need to do in our end of the rink and then, pretty simple, they're not looking to make tick-tack-toe plays although they did on that one goal.

"It's more about getting pucks in, being heavy and getting it back, using the forecheck and getting to the net. You see a lot of tip screens and rebound goals from those guys. There's chemistry building with them and we'd like to see that continue."

lafallo had scored in consecutive games going into Monday's action after going through a 13-game drought of his own, which was another important development for the Jets.

"(Barron's) got so much speed down the line there, in the corners winning all those battles."

There have been plenty of stretches when lafallo played with Barron last season and he'd been used for extended periods with Lowry this season, but rarely had the three of them been used together.

"Yeah, it's fun playing with them," said lafallo. "A lot of chances down low, solid defensively. Obviously (Lowry), taking all those draws, winning those battles is huge for us. Starting with the puck like that. We got a lot more offensive draws too.

"So, that helped out getting those and getting some shots through. (Barron's) got so much speed down the line there, in the corners winning all those battles."

There's no denying that the trio of Mark Scheifele, Gabe Vilardi and Kyle Connor has been driving the offence and supplying the lion's share of the goals, but the Jets have a number of players with a proven track record of putting up points, so the expectation is that things will eventually come around.

"Has to happen. Has to happen," said Arniel. "Other players, other lines have to continue to get their opportunities. The result is, obviously, you want to score goals but, for me, it's that zone time. It's making whoever you're lining up against, make them defend, and that's what you need to do."

### **Winnipeg Sun**

[https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/jets-end-homestand-on-a-downer-lose-to-sens/article\\_2d6f0a3e-1789-447a-b939-de27bdedcf0c.html](https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/jets-end-homestand-on-a-downer-lose-to-sens/article_2d6f0a3e-1789-447a-b939-de27bdedcf0c.html)

### ***Jets end homestand on a downer, lose to Sens***

By Paul Friesen

So much for generating some desperately needed momentum on a four-game homestand.

The Winnipeg Jets put just three points in the bank over the last week, including a single one in Monday's 3-2 overtime loss to the Ottawa Senators.

It's the one that got away in this one that stung.

Up 2-1 late in the third period, the Jets gave up the tying goal with the Ottawa net empty and just 1:54 on the clock.

An overtime rife with chances ended after 2:11, when Brady Tkachuk converted a Tim Stutzle's feed on a Senators two-on-one, leaving the Jets with a 1-2-1 mark after a week in which they hoped to turn their underachieving season around.

"That's not very good," head coach Scott Arniel said. "Not if we're going to try to get into the race."

The Jets started slow, took too many early penalties, grabbed 1-0 and 2-1 leads in the second period, only to let it slip away.

Their only goals came from defencemen Neal Pionk and Logan Stanley, their top line shut out along with everyone else.

"That is a game that should have been won by us," Arniel said. "These are the games you've got to learn to win. We have to find a way at the very end, either to get that third goal or, the other side of it is not to allow the six-on-five goal against.

"We need two points. We need them bad."

A crowd of 13,566, 1,659 short of a full house, saw the Jets fall to 15-15-2.

The struggling Senators, 3-7 coming into this one, improve to 15-13-4.

Goalie Connor Hellebuyck started his second straight game after knee surgery and gave his team a chance, as Winnipeg was out-shot, 31-25, including 4-1 in overtime.

The teams traded two-on-ones in that extra session, Hellebuyck and Linus Ullmark up to the task until Tkachuk's one-timer.

The Jets were trying to win back-to-back games for the first time in a month.

"Very winnable hockey game that we found a way to lose," Stanley said. "Mistakes are going to happen in a game, and two of them ended up in the back of our net. Been a theme right now. It stings. We had great chances in overtime, too.

"Our overall game's been better and trending in the right direction. But we've got to find a way to take two points there."

The Jets survived two first-period penalties, the second, tagged to Mark Scheifele, spent entirely in their own zone.

Winnipeg got its own power play late in the first but couldn't cash in, either, and the teams went to the first break with sevens on the shot clock, zeroes on the board.

Both teams had power plays to start the second period, the Sens' not very effective, the Jets' worse.

Midway through, the Winnipeg defence left Nick Cousins unchecked and he got a shot through Hellebuyck for the game's icebreaker.

The Jets answered some five minutes later, Kyle Connor setting up Pionk for a blast from the point that went off a Senator and in. It was Pionk's second of the year.

The Jets grabbed the lead with 1:25 left in the second, Stanley's wrist shot getting through Ullmark for his third in the last four games and sixth of the season.

Shots were 27-24, Ottawa, after regulation, the Jets No. 1 unit of Scheifele, Connor and Gabe Vilardi finishing the night with five between them.

Up next for Winnipeg, a road trip through St. Louis, Colorado and Utah, beginning Wednesday at the home of the Blues.

"It doesn't get any easier," Stanley said.

It's the bed they've made.

"We get three Central Division opponents here," Arniel said. "We're going to have to just go into St. Louis and make sure we gain some points. We didn't do the job here at home so we're going to have to make sure that we go out on the road and get some."

### **The Athletic**

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6888919/2025/12/16/are-the-jets-good-again/>

#### ***Are the Jets good again or already hopeless? A debate with myself***

By Murat Ates

Connor Hellebuyck is back, the Winnipeg Jets are playing great hockey again and are going to steamroll their way back into playoff position.

For one part of my brain, it is the obvious conclusion to make after the Hart Trophy winner's return on Saturday and the most complete game of Winnipeg's season. There is merit in it: Winnipeg got goals from people who don't usually score, including stellar performances from both special teams, and Washington's Grade A scoring chances were few and far between. For the first time in ages, the Jets looked like the team that won more games than literally any other club in the two seasons before this one.

One little problem, brain. That half of you is obviously wrong.

You saw the Senators game, right? A single game from the team with the 24th-best record is obviously not the kind of sample we can run with. Scott Arniel might have said Saturday was the first time all year Winnipeg has had everyone healthy, implying that was the first day of the rest of Winnipeg's hockey-playing lives, but the Jets are four points out of the playoffs and chasing teams like Utah while trailing Minnesota, Dallas, and Colorado by 11, 18 and 21 points. It's time to accept that this simply isn't Winnipeg's year.

Today we're going tendril to tendril to solve the debate. Are the Jets good again? Are they any good at all? Today, my brain goes toe-to-toe with its worst enemy — itself — in an attempt to sort out who the Jets really are.

*The Jets are good: First full lineup, first complete win*  
All right, you pessimist. Here is my first submission.

"This is the very first time all year long that we had everybody back," Arniel said on Saturday. "I like to think that had something to do with it."



Shouldn't that be enough, offhand? Guy who knows more about hockey than any of us do points at his complete roster? I'm being facetious here; Arniel went on to say the Jets needed to play that well on Monday and Wednesday. Colorado looms at the end of the week. But maybe, just maybe, we should wait until we see the Hellebuyck edition of the Jets — with Adam Lowry, Dylan Samberg, Cole Perfetti and Neal Pionk, without anybody on IR — before casting judgment on what they're capable of?

*The Jets are bad: Barron, dismount or no, isn't an excuse*

So you're just going to trust the coach blindly, then? (Or: Aren't you going to fact-check this, you hack?)

Just because a subject matter expert says something in the media doesn't make it true. Hellebuyck's last five games before his surgery included two wins and three losses, and in his last pair of games in November, Morgan Barron was the only everyday player missing from Winnipeg's lineup.

I'm a big believer in Barron's work ethic, but the Jets' 5-3 loss to Seattle during that painful Western trip came with Lowry, Samberg, Perfetti and Pionk all in the lineup. Are you suggesting the Jets are such a finely tuned yet somehow so vulnerable team that Barron's absence alone was enough to send them into a tailspin? The Jets had their Hart Trophy winner in the lineup and were still losing and still getting beat in terms of underlying numbers.

*The Jets are good: That team you just complained about had a playoff spot*

See the heading, you underlying-numbers-obsessed cynic.

First of all, if you're going to try to pick apart the coach's argument on a technicality, it's worth pointing out Hellebuyck's last loss — that 5-3 defeat in Seattle — was Samberg's first game back. It was Perfetti's third game and Lowry's fifth, so you're being a bit of a twit here. Aren't you the guy who wrote, "The Winnipeg Jets are going to struggle. Don't count them out when they do," because you understood it would take those guys some time to find their game? Seems a little disingenuous to throw it all out now that they're struggling — they're people, not robots, and you seemed to be aware of that before the season started.

And second: Those very Jets you're complaining about were well inside the playoff line. They weren't even a wild-card team — they were third place in the division. Now Lowry looks more like Lowry and Samberg looks more like Samberg. Perfetti has three assists in his last four games, too.

*The Jets are bad: That playoff team had problems, too*

And still does!

The Jets are 24th in the NHL standings. They're 28th in their percentage of shot attempts at five-on-five. Their power play is ranked 13th and their penalty kill is ranked 21st. If I told you these facts about any random team without telling you their name, you wouldn't have the chance to look at that team through Jets-coloured glasses. You'd know in your heart it just didn't have the horses.

*The Jets are good: 'I'm back, baby. Let's just play'*

You heard Connor Hellebuyck, didn't you?

I did hear Hellebuyck say that. I asked him the question.

The fact is Hellebuyck is back. Another “fact” is that underlying numbers do not guarantee wins. Sometimes a team that doesn’t dominate the flow of play in terms of zone time or shot attempts has the world’s best goaltender in its net — the one the league just declared its MVP. You can’t hand-wave away the fact that elite goaltenders can turn modest shot totals in a team’s favour. And that’s what you Corsi-freaks are always forgetting. Goalies are part of the team, too.

Eric Comrie is one of the nicest people on the planet and a fine goaltender in his own right. He also faced 276 shots as the Jets’ starter in Hellebuyck’s absence and made only 242 saves. That’s an .877 save percentage, compared to Hellebuyck’s .916 this season — and if you apply that .916 to the shots Comrie faced, it would save 10 goals. That’s nearly a goal per game and you can’t tell me that Winnipeg would be a 24th-place team had it had Hellebuyck in its net this whole time.

You combine that with lines that finally seem to work and can’t you begin to believe that the Jets will win more of the 50 games they have left?

*The Jets are bad: Or, at least, they’re in a miserable spot*  
Well, isn’t that the problem?

The Jets are in such a bad spot that winning more than half of the 50 games they have left wouldn’t be nearly enough. Last year’s playoff line in the West was 96 points. One of the two teams to hit it, Calgary, didn’t even get in. The Jets are in tough.

The Jets need 64 points in their next 50 games to reach last year’s playoff cut line. Getting to those 96 points would require a .637 points percentage, well beyond what they’d accomplished when Hellebuyck was healthy to start the year. There are only five teams in the entire league playing at .637 or better right now — and three of those five teams play in the Central Division. I don’t care how bright-eyed or bushy-tailed your optimism is this morning. There isn’t a cup of coffee so potent as to make that look good.

Colorado is the best team in the league. Dallas is No. 2, and Minnesota is No. 4 in terms of points and No. 5 in terms of points percentage. Good thing the Wild didn’t just make an enormous upgrade with far-reaching ramifications. And do you remember that part where Winnipeg trails the Wild, Stars and Avalanche by double-digit points? Can you imagine making up that kind of ground while also needing to play against those teams?

The Jets’ best-case scenario is a wild-card spot. Colorado would destroy them. Have you seen how fast the Avalanche play?

*The Jets are good: They’re 61 percent favourites to make the playoffs*  
According to Dom.

So we listen to Dom now?

Yes, actually, we do. You can’t just pick and choose when you care about underlying numbers.

Two things still work in Winnipeg’s favour, no matter how cynical you are. The Central might be the best division in the entire NHL, but nobody in the Pacific Division seems to have their stuff together quite yet. Vegas leads the Pacific but would be in a wild-card spot if it played in the Central. The Oilers just traded one goaltending problem for what seems like another, the Kings

have essentially the same goal differential as the Jets, and the Sharks have come crashing back down to earth.

Let's say the Jets are playing for a wild-card spot. Let's say the Avalanche are a bridge too far — that a first-round rematch would look just as bad as it did two years ago. If the Hellebuyck-led Jets make the run they need to make the playoffs, don't you think they'd be playing well enough to have a chance against Vegas? Don't you think Hellebuyck could outduel Tristan Jarry in Edmonton? The Oilers don't crash the crease the way the Blues or Avs did.

Wait, you're seriously invoking Hellebuyck's playoff record ... from 2021 against the Oilers? As a defence?

*The Jets, good or bad, are stuck in the mushy middle*

Let's say Winnipeg does have its game together — and that a one-game sample size is somehow enough to believe in. Let's say Hellebuyck covers some of their weaknesses and special teams recover enough such that they go on a tear.

Let's say they beat Vegas or Edmonton or whoever in Round 1.

Do you really believe they could survive a series with Colorado, Dallas or Minnesota in a later round? Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Gabriel Vilardi are the only forwards playing at better than half a point per game. What's the payoff here? Shouldn't the team that currently holds the No. 9 draft pick — the highest draft selection it's had since winning the lottery to take Patrik Laine in 2016 — try to maximize its odds of acquiring top-end talent? The Jets certainly aren't getting that job done in free agency.

But that's why they play the games, you cynic. Sports are about drama, emotion and the chance things might finally go our way. You can't change that by criticizing Tanner Pearson, Gustav Nyquist or Jonathan Toews.

I wouldn't dream of it.