

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/04/toews-not-earning-raves>

Toews not earning raves Centre's comeback far from over, but play contributing to Jets' turbulence

By: Mike McIntyre

MONTREAL — Jonathan Toews held court with a mass of mostly French-speaking reporters inside the Winnipeg Jets' cramped Bell Centre locker room on Wednesday morning.

It was an impressive display from the veteran centre, who delivered thoughtful, insightful answers in both official languages. He spoke about the thrill of playing in La belle province, where much of his mother's family still lives, and his hope that the visit might help spark something for him and his struggling teammates.

"A lot of history here in this city. It will be exciting," he said of facing the Habs.

A few hours later, the Jets dropped their 10th game in their last 14 outings — a 3-2 shootout loss — with Toews posting a familiar, frustrating stat line: 0 goals, 0 assists, 0 points.

It marked the ninth time in the past 10 contests the 37-year-old was held off the scoresheet, with a secondary assist last Saturday in Nashville the lone exception.

Toews hasn't scored since Remembrance Day. The three-time Stanley Cup champion currently shares the same offensive totals as much-maligned depth defenceman Logan Stanley: 26 games, three goals, six assists.

He's also a team-worst minus-12, meaning he's been on the ice for plenty of goals going the wrong direction.

The underlying numbers aren't any kinder. According to Natural Stat Trick, the Jets have been outscored 20-8 at even strength with Toews on the ice this season.

His expected-goals percentage, which measures quality of chances, sits at just 42.18 per cent. In other words, opponents are generating 57.82 per cent of the expected offence when he's out there.

"The big thing to JT is it's all new to him right now... and he's the first to admit the league is even faster than when he left it."

Some perspective: Of the 236 NHL players with equal or greater even-strength ice time this season, Toews ranks 235th in goals-for percentage.

Only Calgary Flames defenceman MacKenzie Weegar is worse, having been outscored 35-11 (23.91 per cent). Toews sits at 28.57 per cent and ranks 231st in expected-goals percentage.

"The big thing to JT is it's all new to him right now. It's been a couple years, and he's the first to admit the league is even faster than when he left it," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said prior to puck drop on Wednesday.

As he has each time the subject comes up, Arniel praised Toews' wisdom and experience and expressed hope that those qualities will eventually pay off for a Winnipeg team with Stanley Cup aspirations.

"I know offensively the numbers aren't there. For him, we've talked about it, this isn't a 10-game, 20-game, 30-game thing. This is about building towards the 82nd game and the playoffs," said Arniel.

The issue, of course, is Winnipeg must actually qualify for the 16-team tournament first — and right now that is far from certain. A lack of production beyond the top line is among the biggest culprits.

Fairly or not, that puts a big spotlight on Toews, whose free-agent signing by his hometown team was met with massive organizational fanfare, including a glitzy introductory news conference attended by family, friends, fans and even local politicians.

One of Winnipeg's many problems is they immediately slotted Toews as their second-line centre out of training camp. But his nine points simply haven't matched the demands of that role.

For context, we reviewed what every other 2C in the NHL has done this year. There are some elite ones, such as Wyatt Johnston of Dallas (31 points), Leon Draisaitl of Edmonton (31), John Tavares of Toronto (29) and Evgeni Malkin of Pittsburgh (26) leading the way.

Emerging stars like Logan Cooley of Utah (23), Dawson Mercer of New Jersey (21), Mason McTavish of Anaheim (19), Quinton Byfield of Los Angeles (19), Frank Nazar of Chicago (18), Pavel Zacha of Boston (18) and Dylan Cozens of Ottawa (16) have also thrived.

There are also proven vets such as Nazem Kadri of Calgary (22), Tomas Hertl of Vegas (20), Mathew Barzal of the New York Islanders (18), Brock Nelson of Colorado (17), Joel Eriksson Ek of Minnesota (16), Sean Couturier of Philadelphia (16) who are getting the job done, too.

Connor McMichael of Washington (15), Erik Haula of Nashville (15) Ryan McLeod of Buffalo (14), Oliver Kapanen of Montreal (14), Alex Wennberg of San Jose (13), Sean Monahan of Columbus (13), Sam Bennett of Florida (12), Pius Suter of St. Louis (12), Vincent Trochek of the New York Rangers (12), Shane Wright of Seattle (11) and Logan Stankoven of Carolina (11) round out the field.

The only club getting less production from its 2C than Winnipeg is the 30th-place Vancouver Canucks, who have auditioned several options with no success. Current placeholder David Kampf has zero points in seven games.

"This isn't a 10-game, 20-game, 30-game thing. This is about building towards the 82nd game and the playoffs."

Detroit, using former Jet Andrew Copp, has also received nine points (1G, 8A) in the role. We excluded Tampa Bay, as Nick Paul recently returned from injury but already has five points in seven games.

Misery loves company, and Toews is far from the only Jet scuffling right now. The list is long, with virtually every forward outside of the Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Gabe Vilardi line mired in a major funk.

Toews has also cycled through a rotating cast of wingers — some due to injury, others due to performance — and nothing has truly clicked.

You can see the frustration Toews is feeling on the ice, where there's been plenty of stick slams and audible curse words heard as he makes his way back to the bench in recent games following shifts.

And you can hear it in his voice — whether in French or in English — as he speaks with media.

A three-time Cup champion with countless international medals isn't accustomed to this kind of struggle.

"You get to a certain point and you're waiting for a bounce, waiting for things to go your way, to give you the energy to get over the hump, and that's not really how it works," Toews said Wednesday, while also expressing optimism his fortunes might be about to change.

"I try my best to improve my game, I think it's getting better. Each game I'm getting chances."

There's also an off-ice adjustment phase still underway. The man known as "Captain Serious" is no longer steering the ship or wearing a letter, ceding leadership on his new team to captain Adam Lowry — who called a closed-door meeting after Monday's blowout loss in Buffalo — along with alternates Scheifele and Josh Morrissey.

"We have a lot of leaders in this locker room, a lot of experience, been on winning teams. We have the energy to be one of the top teams in the league," he said in French.

"For me, it's taking time to find my place but I try to have the mentality like when I was a captain — be a leader. It takes time but I'm starting to find my place here."

"I try my best to improve my game, I think it's getting better. Each game I'm getting chances."

There's no question Toews' return to the NHL after a two-year, health-related hiatus has been compelling.

It has brought significant attention to the Jets both in Manitoba and in other markets. Wednesday's huge scrum in Montreal was the latest example.

The good news: he has been able to suit up for every game, which was far from guaranteed when he chose his hometown team over numerous NHL suitors and signed a US\$2-million base deal with up to US\$5 million in bonuses.

Toews has already collected the first US\$550,000 bonus after hitting the 20-game mark, with similar ones to come if he hits 30, 40, 50 and 60.

The additional incentives — US\$500,000 for making the playoffs and US\$1 million for winning the Stanley Cup — might be a bit more far-fetched at this point.

"I wouldn't say that he's doing backflips with his game," general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff told the Free Press last weekend when asked for an honest assessment of how his prized free agent signing has gone.

"It's all a progression. As a group we just need to continue to build as a team."

Some fans may wonder whether a proud athlete like Toews might eventually decide to cut the cord and call it a career. While anything is possible, don't hold your breath.

One thing is certain: while his comeback story is far from over, it hasn't exactly been a page-turner so far.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/04/jets-rumoured-to-host-habs-at-2026-heritage-classic>

Jets rumoured to host Habs at 2026 Heritage Classic

By: Ken Wiebe

It looks like the 2026 Heritage Classic will feature the Winnipeg Jets and the Montreal Canadiens.

Although an official announcement has yet to be made, NHL insider Renaud Lavoie of TVA Sports posted a link from the Jets' website that has since been removed, revealing a few new details about the event.

The seventh edition of the Heritage Classic is expected to be played on Sunday, Oct. 25, at Princess Auto Stadium, home of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

It will be the third time the Jets appear in — and host — a Heritage Classic.

The first was against the Edmonton Oilers at Princess Auto Stadium in 2016, while the second was hosted at Mosaic Stadium in Regina against the Calgary Flames.

The Canadiens certainly make sense as an opponent that would have broad appeal for folks in Manitoba and beyond, given how well the fan base of the Original Six franchise travels.

"It's an Original Six team and if you can't get up to play an Original Six team, there's something wrong," Jets centre Mark Scheifele said after his team lost 3-2 in a shootout at the Bell Centre on Wednesday.

Scheifele was talking about the environment in Montreal for the most recent game between the two clubs, but the quote certainly would apply to the prospect of facing the Habs on a Saturday night on an outdoor rink as well.

Games between the Jets and Canadiens have a fun history of their own, dating back to the first Tuxedo Night that was held on Dec. 15 of 1979 during the 1.0 era of the Jets, who were an NHL expansion team at the time.

The Canadiens are coached by Hockey Hall of Famer Marty St. Louis and led by captain Nick Suzuki.

Montreal entered Thursday's action in second place in the Atlantic Division and their roster features a number of young and exciting players that include skilled blue-liner Lane Hutson, 2020 first-rounder Kaiden Guhle and forwards Cole Caufield, 2022 first overall pick Juraj Slafkovsky and 2024 fourth overall pick Ivan Demidov.

The last time a Heritage Classic was held it was a battle of Alberta, hosted by the Oilers at Commonwealth Stadium against the Flames.

The original Heritage Classic was also hosted by the Oilers back in 2003 against the Canadiens at Commonwealth Stadium.

Elliott Friedman of Hockey Night in Canada revealed several weeks ago that Winnipeg was a front-runner to host the next outdoor game in Canada.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/cats-out-of-the-bag-nhls-heritage-classic-coming-to-winnipeg>

Cat's out of the bag: NHL's Heritage Classic coming to Winnipeg

By Paul Friesen

It seems somebody with the NHL or the Winnipeg Jets jumped the gun, and it's pointing straight at Winnipeg.

Appearing very briefly on the Jets' website on Thursday was an information page for next year's Heritage Classic, the league's Canadian-based outdoor game.

The page, up for maybe half an hour before being taken down, showed the game will be played in Winnipeg on Sunday, Oct. 25, and will feature the Jets against the Montreal Canadiens.

The information included a link where fans could sign up for updates, including ticket information. That link was also quickly disabled.

The page showed an 11 a.m. release time, but no date.

Winnipegger Dave Minuk, editor of the Illegal Curve hockey website and podcast, suspected the news may have been dropped accidentally, as there was no statement from the NHL or the Jets, so he grabbed a screenshot of it.

The news quickly made the website of the Montreal Gazette in addition to illegalcurve.com.

A source with the Jets wouldn't confirm or deny the news.

Expect an announcement confirming it this weekend.

Sports Illustrated (si.com) also ran with the story under the headline, NHL Accidentally Leaks Canadiens vs. Jets Heritage Classic Game.

This will be the second Heritage Classic played at the home of the CFL's Blue Bombers, the first one coming in 2016 at which the Jets faced the Edmonton Oilers.

The stadium seats 32,343 for football and has become quite the gathering/party place for football fans, the Bombers filling it for all nine home games this past season, something they've never done before.

The Jets also took part in the 2019 game in Regina, taking on the Calgary Flames.

The Heritage Classic has usually involved Canadian teams, but there was an exception when Toronto took on Buffalo in 2022.

The first one was played in 2003, when Montreal visited Edmonton on a frigid November day. Its success – more than 57,000 fans attended — led to the creation of the annual Winter Classic between American teams and held in the U.S..

The NHL revived the Canadian version in 2011 and pitted the Canadiens against Calgary. More than 41,000 fans packed McMahon Stadium for that one.

The next site was B.C. Place in Vancouver in 2014, featuring the Canucks and Ottawa.

The 2016 game was in Winnipeg on Oct. 23, as the Oilers beat the Jets, 3-0, on a day that saw the mercury hit 10 C, a bit above seasonal for that time of year.

The start time of that game had to be delayed by two hours, though, as the glare from the sun off the ice made it dangerous for players.

"I feel bad that we're delayed but that's the nature of this business," Jets co-owner Mark Chipman said that day. "It's a nationally televised hockey game and those things are set for good and valid reasons. It's unfortunate but I think people understand."

"For the players the two-hour delay was a bit annoying," Blake Wheeler, Jets captain at the time, said. "But for the fans it might have helped get hydrated there a little bit. It was great weather, they did a great job with the ice. You really couldn't ask for better conditions. It was a great weekend for Winnipeg. The community had a great time embracing the festivities."

Three years later, the Jets won the 2019 game against Calgary, 2-1.

The next one pitted Toronto against Buffalo in Hamilton in 2022, while Calgary visited Edmonton's Commonwealth Stadium a year later.

There wasn't a Heritage Classic last season and there won't be one this season, making next October's the first one in three years.

The event also typically draws legends of the past to take part in an alumni game.

Former Jets great Dale Hawerchuk and Wayne Gretzky were two of the legends skating in the 2016 Heritage Classic, deemed a success despite the sun delay.

“There’s a bit of a circus atmosphere, and it’s been in town for about five days,” Paul Maurice, then Jets head coach, said. “It was great to have it here ... the climate was fantastic out there, the ice was just exceptional for an outdoor rink. It was great for the city of Winnipeg.

“We showed ourselves in a very positive light.”

No pun was intended, as far as we know.

We’ll see what the weather will bring to next year’s game, but it’s already made history.

Just call it The Leak.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11560331/winnipeg-jets-another-outdoor-game-2026-heritage-classic/>

Winnipeg Jets to host another outdoor game for 2026 Heritage Classic

By Russ Hobson Global News

Hockey is returning to the home of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

The Winnipeg Jets will host another outdoor game next year. While there’s been no announcement from the Jets or the NHL yet, it was up on the league’s official website briefly on Thursday afternoon before getting taken down a short time later.

A Jets source would neither confirm nor deny that there is indeed an outdoor game coming up next year, but it’s believed an official announcement for a Heritage Classic at Princess Auto Stadium will come as soon as this weekend.

The Jets are expected to play the Montreal Canadiens on Sunday, Oct. 25.

It’ll be the second outdoor NHL game in Winnipeg after the Jets previously hosted the Heritage Classic in 2016 against the Edmonton Oilers, where the Jets lost 3-0.

The Jets also played the Calgary Flames in an outdoor game in Regina in 2019.

Canadian Press

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/12/04/winnipeg-jets-montreal-canadiens-heritage-classic-game/>

Jets to Host Canadiens in Heritage Classic Game: NHL

By Canadian Press

The Winnipeg Jets will play host to the Montreal Canadiens at Princess Auto Stadium next fall in the 2026 NHL Heritage Classic.

The league announced the game on Thursday and then quickly pulled the information from its website.

In what is believed to be a premature announcement of the event, the game will reportedly be played on October 25, 2026.

The Jets hosted the Edmonton Oilers back in 2016 in the last Heritage Classic that Winnipeg was involved in, followed by a neutral-site game in Regina in 2019 against the Calgary Flames.

According to NHL.com, a sign-up form for ticket information was temporarily available on Thursday before being scrubbed. No further information has been released, and True North Sports + Entertainment hasn't confirmed the event.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/after-a-hot-start-why-are-the-winnipeg-jets-struggling/>

After a hot start, why are the Winnipeg Jets struggling?

By Adam Vingan

On Monday, the Winnipeg Jets held the dreaded players-only meeting after their 5-1 loss to the Buffalo Sabres. The loss was Winnipeg's fifth in its past six games, which necessitated some soul-searching.

"I'd love to give you all the answers," Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo told reporters Monday. "If I had them all, we wouldn't be in the position we're in. We're trying to figure it out. (Time) is of the essence."

Although the Jets put forth a much better effort on Wednesday against the Montreal Canadiens, they still lost 3-2 in a shootout. Since starting 9-3-0, the Jets are 4-9-1 since Nov. 4 — the worst record in the NHL by points percentage (.321).

Here is a look at what has gone wrong for the Jets as of late:

Come back, Connor

First and foremost, the Jets sorely miss starting goaltender Connor Hellebuyck, who underwent arthroscopic knee surgery last month. No team, to be fair, would excel without a reigning MVP. But Hellebuyck's importance to the Jets' success cannot be overstated. They are 2-5-1 since he left the lineup.

Winnipeg is a bottom-third defensive team this season, ranking 23rd in expected goals against per game in all situations and 27th at five-on-five. Following his final start before being shut down, Hellebuyck had saved 16 goals above expected in all situations through Nov. 15 — second-most in the NHL, behind only Chicago's Spencer Knight (16.5). Hellebuyck had 11 quality starts in 14 tries (78.6 per cent) and three steals.

Eric Comrie and rookie Thomas Milic, meanwhile, have made three combined quality starts in eight games without Hellebuyck (37.5 per cent). That is despite the fact that the Jets have actually performed well defensively in Hellebuyck's absence. Winnipeg is 10th in expected goals against per game in all situations since Nov. 18. Comrie, to his credit, was excellent against Montreal on Wednesday, saving roughly two goals above expected in Winnipeg's shootout loss.

Jets coach Scott Arniel told reporters Wednesday that Hellebuyck “is getting close” to resuming on-ice activities following his surgery but that the organization is being extra cautious.

“I’m going to make sure he has, like, four (non-contact) jerseys on him,” Arniel said.

Secondary scoring remains nonexistent

The Jets’ top line of Kyle Connor, Mark Scheifele and Gabe Vilardi has continued crushing it during the team’s recent 1-5-1 slump, outscoring opponents 9-5 at five-on-five and combining for 23 points in all situations. That trio was responsible for both Jets goals against the Canadiens.

The rest of Winnipeg’s forward lines, however, have not done their part, which has been an issue all season. Over the past seven games, the Jets have been outscored 13-3 when Connor, Scheifele and Vilardi are off the ice.

Only one forward line — Colorado’s Artturi Lehkonen, Nathan MacKinnon and Martin Necas (26) — has recorded more goals than Winnipeg’s No. 1 line (25) at five-on-five. No other forward combination used by the Jets this season, however, has been on the ice for more than four Jets goals.

Perhaps expectedly, 37-year-old centre Jonathan Toews (nine points in 26 games) has struggled after sitting out the previous two seasons. Winnipeg has been outscored 17-7 and outchanced 141-96 during Toews’ minutes at five-on-five.

The current version of Winnipeg’s second line — Toews, Vladislav Namestnikov and Cole Perfetti — has been outscored 4-2 at five-on-five in more than 100 minutes of ice time. By comparison, last season’s second line of Namestnikov, Perfetti and Nikolaj Ehlers outscored opponents 24-14.

“The big thing with (Toews) is that it’s all new to him right now, because it’s been a couple years,” Arniel told reporters Wednesday. “He’s the first to admit that the league is even faster than when he left it. ... I know offensively the numbers aren’t there, but for him, we’ve talked about (how) this isn’t a 10-game, 20-game, 30-game thing. This is about building toward the 82nd game and then (the) playoffs.”

One question for Arniel is whether he would consider splitting up Connor, Scheifele and Vilardi in an attempt to find more balanced scoring. When all of them have been in the lineup, they have rarely been apart since the start of last season.

Regardless of how the Jets go about it, they must find a way to get more offence from their other three forward lines.

“It’s a long season for a reason,” Connor told reporters Monday. “I believe in this group, the leadership that we have, the players in here. It’s in this room. It’s (on) us to figure it out and turn this thing around and grab that identity and grab ahold of something that makes us tick. It seems like we’re still trying to find that.”

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/scouts-analysis-how-top-prospects-for-canadian-teams-are-performing/>

Scout's Analysis: How top prospects for Canadian teams are performing

By Jason Bukala

With the calendar flipping to December, the hockey season enters an exciting segment of the year with the world junior championship at the end of the month in Minnesota.

It's also a good time to check in with the progress previously drafted players are making as they continue to develop with their club teams around the world.

As part of my ongoing updates on prospects from Canadian NHL teams, here's a look at how the first players selected by each team last June in Los Angeles have been trending this fall:

Winnipeg Jets

Sascha Boumedienne, six-foot-two, 190 pounds, left-shot defenceman, first round (28th overall)

Boumedienne is a sophomore at Boston University and, like most of his teammates, off to an uneven start this season. He has two goals and four assists and is minus-nine on the season. The Terriers are a streaky .500 team. Boston has three-game winning and losing streaks in its first 15 games and sits 7-7-1 overall.

Boumedienne is a potential middle-pairing NHL defenceman who logs a massive amount of ice time. He's deployed in all situations and averages between 22-26 minutes per game. He's one of the most elite skaters in the NCAA. He's quick to front opponents defensively, can lead the breakout with the puck on his stick or join the rush as an extra layer, and walks the blue line efficiently to open up shooting and passing lanes.

Considering Boumedienne's skating ability, I was surprised to notice how he rarely pinches down in the offensive zone to direct pucks on net and equally as surprised to notice how many of his attempts are actually making it to the net. It's an area of his game that has room for improvement.

Daily Faceoff

<https://www.dailyfaceoff.com/news/winnipeg-jets-underperforming-2025-26-nhl-season-connor-hellebuyck-jonathan-toews-gustav-nyquist>

The Winnipeg Jets are underperforming, but it hasn't just been bad luck

By Mike Gould

The Winnipeg Jets woke up on December 4, 2024 with an 18-8-0 record and 36 points, tied for the second-most in the entire National Hockey League. They went on to win the Presidents' Trophy and reached the second round of the 2025 Stanley Cup Playoffs.

It's amazing just how much one year can change things. As of Thursday morning, the Jets sit outside a playoff spot with just under a third of the 2025-26 NHL regular season in the books. Everything about their season to date — their 13-12-1 record, their .519 points percentage,

even their modest plus-1 goal differential — screams mediocrity, but it might not even be that good.

Connor Hellebuyck, the reigning Vezina and Hart Trophy as winner as the league's top goaltender and most valuable player, respectively, has been out of action since November 15 while dealing with a knee injury. In that time, the Jets have gone 2-5-1, most recently losing to the Buffalo Sabres and Montreal Canadiens to kick off their December schedule.

Hellebuyck has always been one of the few goaltenders consistently able to paper over even his team's most glaring flaws, but this year is looking a little bit different. Even at their best, the Jets have seldom been true puck possession juggernauts — good, but not great — but this year, they've been downright bad across the board.

According to Natural Stat Trick, the Jets are a bottom-five team in the NHL this year in both shot and expected goal differential at full strength. They're currently second-last in scoring chance rates, having generated just 505 of them compared to 611 against. And while they looked to be showing gradual signs of improvement in all three categories in late November, their last two games have been full of setbacks.

The Jets kicked off the holiday month with a miserable 5-1 road loss to the Sabres in which nothing went right. It looked like they might be able to mount a comeback when Kyle Connor scored midway through the second period, but they lost focus quickly, as evidenced by the comedy of errors that led to Alex Tuch restoring the hosts' three-goal lead just over a minute later.

If anything, that game more than any other encapsulates this Jets season: Connor, Mark Scheifele, and Josh Morrissey each had one point, but nobody else did, and the Sabres outchanced the Jets 28 to 15 at 5-on-5. Eric Comrie allowed three goals on 14 shots before being pulled in favor of Thomas Milic, who surrendered two more on 17 against. In the end, Buffalo outshot Winnipeg 31 to 24.

It's been tough for the Jets to overcome the loss of Nikolaj Ehlers, who consistently drove play to a strong degree during his decade in Manitoba. The Danish forward signed with the Carolina Hurricanes as an unrestricted free agent over the summer, leaving the Jets with a big hole to fill up front.

But instead of doing that, Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff went out and signed a pair of thirty-somethings in Gustav Nyquist and Jonathan Toews to one-year deals. It hasn't worked. Ostensibly brought in to fill Ehlers' shoes as an undersized playmaking top-six winger, the 36-year-old Nyquist has been anything but, recording zero goals and six assists through 20 games while seeing his ice time decrease significantly.

Toews, meanwhile, has struggled enormously to keep up in his return to the NHL after a two-year absence. The Winnipeg product has three goals and nine points through 26 games to go along with a team-worst minus-12 rating, which has only gotten worse as the season has worn on. Instead of goal or point streaks, Toews had a seven-game minus streak with the Jets between November 13 and 28, recording zero points over that span.

While it's certainly valid to debate the merits of Toews attempting a comeback after two years away from the game, it's far more relevant to question why exactly the Jets felt comfortable entering the season without either a capable replacement for Ehlers or a feasible No. 2 center

behind Scheifele. After all, the Jets have made trade after trade over the years to address their center depth, acquiring the likes of Paul Stastny, Kevin Hayes, and Sean Monahan to shore up the position. At 37 years of age and with significant question marks around his health, Toews isn't exactly a legitimate top-six option at this point in his career.

Hellebuyck's injury has merely exacerbated the foundational problems impacting this Jets team, and maybe that's for the best. Things are bound to improve once the Jets get their MVP back, but they shouldn't stand pat with the skaters they already have. Cheveldayoff has a solid collection of assets at his disposal, and even with the relatively shallow pool of potential options available via trade, the Jets should be able to retool their roster in a meaningful way.

Unlike some of their fellow Canadian clubs, the Jets don't need to tear it all down and start over. They have Hellebuyck, Scheifele, Connor, and Morrissey locked in for the foreseeable future. All they need to do is make smart, calculated bets on potential long-term pieces. Adding more declining veterans like Toews, Nyquist, and Luke Schenn simply isn't the way to go for this Jets team, and their recent play (and record) reflects that.

The Central Division is as competitive as ever, and the Jets can't afford to repeat last year's mistake of largely standing pat. They should be aggressive now, because before long, it'll be the right time for them to strike.

The Hockey News

<https://thehockeynews.com/news/latest-news/the-winnipeg-jets-have-too-much-talent-beyond-hellebuyck-to-struggle>

The Winnipeg Jets Have Too Much Talent Beyond Hellebuyck To Struggle

By Adam Proteau

The Winnipeg Jets are a curious team.

While they're without star goaltender Connor Hellebuyck, who had knee surgery two weeks ago, this is still largely the same group that won the Presidents' Trophy last season as the NHL's top regular-season team.

And yet, after they lost to the Montreal Canadiens in a shootout Wednesday night, the Jets have gone 2-5-1 after Hellebuyck last played on Nov. 15. Their .313 points percentage in that span is tied for last in the league.

This speaks to Hellebuyck's immense value to the Jets – he is the defending Hart Trophy winner, after all. But scratch beneath the surface, and you'll see that there are clearly multiple other issues that are plaguing Winnipeg right now.

Yes, the Jets have allowed the 11th-most goals against per game during Hellebuyck's absence, while they conceded the eighth-fewest goals per game beforehand. Goalie Eric Comrie has a .891 save percentage and 3.14 goals-against average in seven starts, while Thomas Milic has an .882 SP and 3.65 GAA in two appearances.

But they also have the seventh-worst offense in the NHL since Nov. 16 at 2.50 goals-for per game. And their special teams have also been a problem in that span. Their 15-percent power-play success rate and 78.9-percent penalty-kill rate each rank tied for 20th.

Hellebuyck's injury is projected to keep him on the sidelines until late December or early January. Winnipeg is only two points out of a playoff spot with two games in hand. But this team has too much talent, even without Hellebuyck, to be in this predicament.

The Jets' next stretch includes games against the desperate Buffalo Sabres, Edmonton Oilers, Dallas Stars, Boston Bruins, Washington Capitals, Ottawa Senators, St. Louis Blues and Colorado Avalanche. That won't be a cakewalk by any means, with the Avs, Stars and Caps sitting in the top three of the standings.

In the highly competitive Central Division, Winnipeg's challenge is considerable and constant. They need to be consistent in a way they haven't been since they came out of the gate 9-3-0. Even a .500 points percentage stretch likely won't push them back to the top of the division.

Some of their challenge falls at the feet of the Jets' secondary scorers.

Only four forwards have at least 0.50 points per game – Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor, Gabriel Vilardi and Nino Niederreiter – and they need much more production out of players beyond their top line. Veteran center Jonathan Toews is a high-profile addition to the Jets, but the 37-year-old has three goals and nine points in 26 games.

Winnipeg wants more out of the second-line center spot they signed Toews to occupy, but he's been out of the league for two seasons before making his comeback this year.

Clearly, they need more out of their bottom six forwards and from their defensemen other than star Josh Morrissey.

The Jets have \$4.28 million in salary cap space – which is projected to balloon to \$13.6 million at the March 6 trade deadline. But if they wait too long to spend that cap space, Winnipeg could be stuck closer to the bottom of the Central standings. So Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff has to balance his longer-term needs with his immediate goals.

In any case, Winnipeg's focus has to be on either ratcheting up its defensive game without Hellebuyck or getting out of this scoring slump. All NHL teams will only do as well as they can when their key players are healthy and in the lineup, but they have enough skaters right now to get the job done.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6863358/2025/12/04/nhl-heritage-classic-jets-canadiens-2026/>

Post announcing Winnipeg Jets vs. Canadiens in 2026 NHL Heritage Classic taken down

By Murat Ates and Chris Johnston

The Winnipeg Jets will host a Heritage Classic outdoor game against the Montreal Canadiens at Princess Auto Stadium on Oct. 25, 2026, league sources told The Athletic.

The Jets website posted the information on Thursday, revealing the opponent, date, location and a link to a Heritage Classic homepage in the events section of the NHL site. Both sites were taken down by mid-afternoon Central Time.

The Jets offered no comment when contacted by The Athletic, but league sources confirmed the details posted Thursday were accurate.

It is the second outdoor game Winnipeg will have hosted at that site, following an Oct. 23, 2016 game against the Edmonton Oilers that also included an alumni game featuring Dale Hawerchuk, Teemu Selanne, Wayne Gretzky, Mark Messier and other former NHL greats. It's the third outdoor game in Jets history; they were the "hosting" team in a 2-1 overtime win against Calgary in Regina in 2019, with Bryan Little scoring the game-winning goal.

It is the fifth outdoor game in Canadiens history. They beat the Oilers 4-3 at the inaugural Heritage Classic in 2003 in Edmonton, then were shut out 4-0 by the Flames at McMahon Stadium in 2011. They also beat Boston 5-1 on New Year's Day 2016 at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts, and lost to the Ottawa Senators 3-0 at TD Place Stadium in Ottawa on Dec. 16, 2017. Montreal has yet to host an outdoor game.