

## **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/01/12/perfetti-getting-his-groove-back>

### ***Perfetti getting his groove back Jets forward finding his game on newly-configured second line***

By: Ken Wiebe

To suggest that Cole Perfetti has fully turned the corner might be a slight exaggeration, but the Winnipeg Jets forward is clearly trending upward.

By chipping in a pair of two-assist efforts on the weekend to help the Jets earn consecutive victories for the first time since mid-November, Perfetti is demonstrating both the consistency and offensive production that has been missing for various points of a season that has been frustrating for many individuals and for the team as a whole.

No matter how you want to describe it, having Perfetti more involved offensively is something the Jets desperately need.

“Yeah, that’s that player that we’ve kind of been waiting on,” Jets head coach Scott Arniel said after Sunday’s 4-3 win over the New Jersey Devils. “Getting his game up to speed in the sense of he’s doing some things (like) moving with the puck, (showing) his vision and playmaking and he’s getting himself into areas where he’s getting that shot.”

Clearly, it’s been a tough slog this season for Perfetti, who suffered a high ankle sprain in an exhibition game against the Calgary Flames near the end of training camp and missed 14 games at the start of the campaign.

“You can see (that) now (Perfetti) is feeling a lot better.”

He’s essentially been trying to play catch-up ever since and these 30 games have featured more valleys than peaks.

But Perfetti has a goal and six points in his past six games on the second line with Jonathan Toews (two goals, six points in past nine games) and Gabe Vilardi (two goals and seven points during the past six games) that is clicking.

“That line is showing some chemistry,” said Arniel. “You can see (that) now (Perfetti) is feeling a lot better. For those kind of guys, goal scorers, those kind of offensive guys, it’s like a 50-pound weight is taken off them when all of a sudden they get those goals or they get touches. Even if they don’t score, if they’re creating, they’re feeling good about themselves and you’re seeing it with Cole.”

How does Perfetti see the turn of the tide?

It’s a combination of things coming together.

“Maybe a little bit of puck luck, a little more confidence,” said Perfetti, who has three goals and 13 points overall. “We’re doing well as a line and taking care of our own zone and, in turn, we’re getting a lot of O-zone time. And yeah, I would say feeling a little bit more confident in myself and my ankle, all that kind of stuff. It’s feeling a lot better.”

Given the nature of the injury, Perfetti might not be up to full speed until the off-season, but after this sprint to the Olympic break, there’s another extended period of time for the healing process to continue that wouldn’t be there during a normal season.

“A little reset, (some) family time, just kind of get your mind off the game and just hang out with family and, most importantly, rest the body,” said Perfetti. “I came out of the break feeling a lot better and just rejuvenated. And I think a lot of us did. We’ve been playing better hockey (ever) since.”

Perfetti is known to be someone that can be extremely hard on himself when things aren’t going well, which is an area of expertise for Toews — who has spoken openly this season about dealing with that throughout most of his storied career.

“I don’t think it’s all a bad thing. It’s good to have that drive and ambition,” Toews said last week. “You obviously see a young guy with his talent and his ability and he’s going to be hard on himself because he expects big things.

“But at the same time, there are situations where you’ve just got to let things go, you’ve got to laugh it off, and you’ve got to keep going, regardless of whether the puck goes in or not. You have that good feeling, that good sense of confidence about yourself and I could see him sometimes getting upset or wound up. And you know, I see myself in that. So, it takes one to know one, I guess. But I’m just trying to remind him that he’s a hell of a player. He’s a tremendous talent and it’s fun to see him improve and get better every day.”

Having Toews around as a sounding board for Perfetti is one of those intangibles that isn’t measurable in the traditional point totals, but it’s become increasingly evident during this recent stretch — and figures to continue to be.

“He’s been really good for me,” said Perfetti. “Mindset wise, I sometimes dwell on things and replay things in my head, or let it get to me. And he’s really good at just moving on to the next shift, the next day, the next game, whatever it is. And, it’s starting to wear off (on Perfetti).

“If you go out there on the ice and you don’t like your last shift, or you get scored on, or you miss an empty net or whatever the case may be, just kind of erasing it from your mind and moving on to the next shift. It’s crazy how good he is at that, and just moving forward. It’s been really good for me.”

“I sometimes dwell on things and replay things in my head, or let it get to me. And he’s really good at just moving on to the next shift.”

**THE RECALL:** The Jets took Monday off after playing three games in four days, but they announced that defenceman Colin Miller has been placed on injured reserve and that Isaak Phillips has been recalled from the Manitoba Moose of the American Hockey League.

Miller (lower body) was injured in the first period of Sunday's game and will miss at least seven days of action.

Since top defence prospect Elias Salomonsson was not recalled at this time, this likely signals that Phillips is going to be the seventh D-man and Luke Schenn will draw back into the lineup on Tuesday against the New York Islanders as the Jets close out this five-game homestand.

Phillips, who has 56 NHL games on his resumé with the Chicago Blackhawks, has three goals and 13 points in 33 games with the Moose this season.

On Monday, the Jets also reassigned centre Jacob Julien from the Norfolk Admirals of the ECHL to the Moose.

Julien, chosen in the fifth round of the 2023 NHL draft, got into a pair of games with the Admirals after missing the first half of the season with an injury he suffered in the prospects tournament in Montreal back in September.

The Moose continue a six-game road trip on Tuesday against the Rockford IceHogs.

### **Winnipeg Sun**

[https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg\\_jets/ex-jets-boss-rick-bowness-makes-another-comeback/article\\_733ffd0-3101-4897-8972-7cca25a6b6fc.html](https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg_jets/ex-jets-boss-rick-bowness-makes-another-comeback/article_733ffd0-3101-4897-8972-7cca25a6b6fc.html)

### ***Ex-Jets boss Rick Bowness makes another comeback***

By Paul Friesen

It turns out Rick Bowness didn't say goodbye to the NHL for good, after all.

The former Winnipeg Jets head coach is back behind the bench, this time to guide the underachieving Columbus Blue Jackets.

The Blue Jackets fired Dean Evason to hire the 70-year-old Bowness on Monday.

"Rick Bowness is a tremendous coach with invaluable experience and knowledge, and he will bring a steadiness to our team at an important juncture in our season," Blue Jackets GM Don Waddell said in a statement. "He is a good communicator whose teams play with structure, are sound defensively and we believe he is the right person to bring out the best in our group."

Bowness was quoted in the same statement.

"I appreciate the opportunity to come to Columbus because it is a good organization with good people and this is a team that I think I can help improve," he said. "I'm thankful to Don and (Blue Jackets President) Mike Priest and I'm really excited to work with our players and coaching staff to help get us where we want to go."

It wasn't even two years ago that Bowness walked away from the game, for good it seemed at the time, following another early Jets playoff ouster in late-April, 2024.

"Walking off the ice, I didn't like me, I didn't like the way our team played, which is on me," Bowness told the media a few days later. "So I was unhappy with myself, unhappy that we had lost, and that bothered me. As I was standing there and I was looking around, it dawned on me. It just hit me then. It's time."

After an uninspiring, five-game loss to Colorado, Bowness told his coaching staff, including his successor, Scott Arniel, he was retiring.

At the time, health was a big part of Bowness's decision.

The New Brunswick native had just led the Jets to a career-best, 52-win regular season and for the first time in his 38-year career was a finalist for the Jack Adams Award as the NHL coach of the year.

But he'd gone through some health challenges over the previous few years, including a harsh bout with COVID. His wife, Judy, also suffered a seizure during Bowness's final year with the Jets, taking him away from the team yet again.

It's the second time a team has coaxed Bowness out of retirement, as Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff did the same thing in the summer of 2022.

"I couldn't have picked a better place to come back and finish my career," Bowness said when he left the Jets, the team he started his coaching career with in the late 1980s.

He'll try to top it in Columbus.

The Blue Jackets, last in the Eastern Conference with a 19-19-7 record, don't visit Winnipeg again this season, but the Jets do make a trip to Columbus in April.

[https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg\\_jets/jets-dip-into-farm-for-blue-line-help/article\\_16f49296-1124-4b2f-9015-b601a3040f98.html](https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg_jets/jets-dip-into-farm-for-blue-line-help/article_16f49296-1124-4b2f-9015-b601a3040f98.html)

### ***Jets dip into farm for blue-line help***

By Paul Friesen

The Winnipeg Jets have called up another farmhand, this time to help their blue line.

After moving veteran Colin Miller to injured reserve, the Jets have called on Isaak Phillips from the American League's Manitoba Moose.

The 24-year-old Phillips has played in 33 AHL games and recorded three goals, 10 assists and 22 minutes in penalties, with a plus-3 rating.

A fifth-round Chicago draft pick in 2020, the 6-foot-3, 205-pounder from Barrie, Ont., was picked up by the Jets in a trade one year ago this month, Winnipeg sending Dmitry Kuzmin to the Blackhawks.

Phillips played 56 games over parts of four seasons with Chicago, recording two goals, 10 assists and 31 minutes in penalties, with a minus-37 rating.

In 271 AHL games, he's tallied 29 goals and 101 points.

Phillips becomes the second minor-leaguer recalled this month, after forward Danil Zhilkin made his NHL debut against Edmonton on Jan. 8 and played the last three games.

Winners of their last two games, most recently a 4-3 decision over New Jersey on Sunday, the Jets host the New York Islanders on Tuesday, before a stop in Minnesota two days later.

At 17-22-5, they remain just two points out of the NHL basement, nine out of a wildcard playoff spot.

### **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/topic/short-shifts/star-wears-winnipeg-jets-bomber-camo-jackets>

#### ***Star Wears: Jets award bomber, camo jackets to players of game Teams around NHL give out unique prize for great play in victories***

By Dan O'Leary

Welcome to Star Wears, where our Short Shifts squad will highlight each participating NHL team's unique and creative way to honor their player of the game after each victory, handing them a token of appreciation that usually lasts at least one season, and sometimes takes on a life of its own.

*Team: Winnipeg Jets*

*Item(s): Leather Fighter Pilot Jacket & Camo Fatigue Jacket*

Origin Story: The team name Jets is a nod to the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), so the team's player of the game item took off from there.

City/Team Connection (dubious or otherwise): The city is still home to 17 Wing/Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Winnipeg, a major base since 1925. The RCAF dates back to 1920 and was a major contributor to the British Commonwealth Air Training Program during World War II, carrying out multiple operations on three different continents.

*Fun Fact:* The Jets are one of the few teams to give out two postgame awards. According to captain Adam Lowry, the bomber jacket is for the star of the game and the camouflage jacket is for the game's unsung hero. "Guys that get down and dirty and do some of the gritty stuff that help you win," Lowry said.

*Quotable:* "It's nice to recognize the things that kind of go unnoticed in a game and I think it's our way of recognizing we need the offensive flash, but you also need some of the little things to win games," Lowry said. Everyone can play a role and have a contribution — kind of recognize those people is kind of a way to cap off a good night."

### **City News Winnipeg**

<https://winnipeg.citynews.ca/2026/01/12/barbershop-goes-viral-after-catching-a-winnipeg-jets-call-up-on-camera/>

## ***Barbershop goes viral after catching a Winnipeg Jets call-up on camera***

By Koby Mitchell

Have you ever gotten a call from your boss at an awkward time? Well, if you're a fan of the Winnipeg Jets or a fan of hockey in general, you might have seen a clip that went viral last week.

"I was in the chair, I heard my phone vibrating, and I just kind of silenced it, cause you know the haircut wasn't done, so I'm like ok ill get it later. Then I'm walking up to pay, and I'm getting the call again, and it says Vancouver, B.C., and I'm like, 'Who is calling me from Vancouver?' And it was my Manitoba Moose coach, and he said you're going up to the NHL," explained Danny Zhilkin, a forward with the Winnipeg Jets.

Arjay Policarpio, the barber of the Jets' rookie, captured the milestone moment, posting the security footage from Avail Barbershop online, and it blew up overnight.

"I just wanted to share someone's milestone. Right? Like I cheer for everyone, like it's my own achievement. It was nice to have that being shown to pretty much everyone around the world," said Policarpio.

"It was just a regular day, really. His phone was buzzing, and I'm like, you should probably take that, it's probably important, no?"

The 22-year-old made his NHL debut on Thursday vs. the Edmonton Oilers, and thanks to Arjay, Zhilkin was looking sharp for one of hockey's most cherished traditions.

"Yeah, well, shoutout to Arjay for having my hair looking great for that, obviously no bucket. But it was awesome. I was just trying not to fall out there obviously, for my first lap," said Zhilkin.

Policarpio saying, "It's like a proud brother moment for me watching Danny on the ice. I'm losing my voice from having to scream just Danny's name alone, right?"

Zhilkin, who moved to Toronto when he was nine from Moscow, was drafted 77th overall in the third round of the 2022 NHL Entry Draft. It's been a long road to the show, and Zhilkin is still can't believe his dream has come true.

"Back then, I never really thought I would play for the Winnipeg Jets, and you know it's such a hard step to make it to the NHL. But dreams come true, I guess. And it's been pretty special," said Zhilkin.

The Jets are 2-1 with Zhilkin in the lineup. They host the New York Islanders on Tuesday.