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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/blog-morrissey-moves-past-buff>

***BLOG: Morrissey moves past Buff***

***Morrissey: "I'm not sure I ever thought I would pass him in something, but yeah, it's pretty cool."***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – Another game, another milestone for Winnipeg Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey.

The Calgary product moved past Dustin Byfuglien into top spot for assists by a defenceman in franchise history on Monday in the Jets 2-1 win in Calgary. Byfuglien was Morrissey's first defence partner when he came to the NHL.

"Just so much admiration for him, so much respect for him, very thankful for his mentorship," said Morrissey after practice at hockey for all centre on Wednesday.

"I guess, early on, and how many things I learned from him, I'm not sure I ever thought I would pass him in something, but yeah, it's pretty cool."

Morrissey and the Jets are off to a 5-1 start to the season which must be looked upon as impressive considering they are missing Adam Lowry, Dylan Samberg and Cole Perfetti and have a bunch of new faces in the lineup.

"Yeah, I think we've talked all through training camp and the start of the year about our depth. I think we've got something that's a real strength of our organization, our team, guys that can come in and fill some big roles," said Morrissey.

"And obviously we've got really good players out of our lineup, but if you look at our overall game, our power play, penalty kill, goaltending has been really good, and our five-on-five game, I think we have room to improve but there is still a lot of positives there."

Not many changes to the line rushes and D pairings from what we saw in Calgary earlier in the week. Morgan Barron was not on the ice today and head coach Scott Arniel said that Barron is day-to-day.

Another impressive feat to start the campaign is that Nino Niederreiter is producing even though he has had to play with multiple centremen. Niederreiter played almost exclusively with Adam Lowry since he came to Winnipeg but has already skated with Vlad Namestnikov and currently is with Jonathan Toews and Gustav Nyquist.

"Obviously they're new to the team, make sure we talk a lot like I mentioned and getting down the system," said Niederreiter.

"Tell them kind of like how we do things here and how things are supposed to look like. And I think each and every game, they feel like to get better as well."

### ***MORE TALK ABOUT THE PK***

It's hard not to talk about the penalty kill daily considering that they haven't given up a power play goal since opening night and sit atop the league in that department at 96.3%. No Lowry or Samberg hasn't slowed this group down at all with Jonathan Toews, Tanner Pearson and Cole Koepke understanding how to make Dean Chynoweth's system work.

"We tried to make sure in training camp that we got some real good reps in practice. But we also made sure we use those guys that were new that we were going to look at," said Arniel.

"You know, Tanner Pearson, Koepke, those type of guys, get them out there and see, get them in situations where we can keep teaching them before the season started."

The Jets return to action Thursday night when they host the Seattle Kraken at Canada Life Centre.

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/10/22/morrissey-latest-jet-to-reach-franchise-milestone>

### ***Morrissey latest Jet to reach franchise milestone***

By: Ken Wiebe

Milestone magic has been prominent for the Winnipeg Jets in the early part of this season.

By assisting on Mark Scheifele's game-winning goal on Monday against the Calgary Flames, Josh Morrissey moved past Dustin Byfuglien for the most assists by a defenceman in Jets franchise history.

When asked about the significance of hitting 295 assists, Morrissey was quick to shout out Byfuglien for the impact he's had on his NHL career.

"My first D partner in the NHL. We played the first 40 or 50 games together as a pairing in my rookie year," said Morrissey. "I have so much respect for him and I'm very thankful for his mentorship early on and how many things I learned from him. I'm not sure I ever thought I'd pass him in something, but it's pretty cool. It's a testament to playing with a lot of great players and a lot of guys that can put the puck in the back of the net."

Byfuglien still has the edge in goals (122 to 80) and points (416 to 375), though it seems like a matter of time before Morrissey moves to the top of those categories as well.

The assist on Monday also moved Morrissey into a tie for fifth in assists in franchise history with Nikolaj Ehlers.

In the Jets' 4-1 win over the Nashville Predators on Saturday, Scheifele moved past former linemate Blake Wheeler to take sole possession of the franchise mark for points and increased that total to 814 on Monday with his goal.

**NIEDERREITER ON A ROLL:** Jets winger Nino Niederreiter is riding a four-game point streak and has moved into third place in team scoring with two goals and six points in six games.

The Swiss forward has done a nice job of adapting to new linemates in the early going, since captain Adam Lowry continues to work his way back from off-season hip surgery and Mason Appleton signed as a free agent with the Detroit Red Wings.

“He’s done a really good job of trying to figure out his centreman and his linemates,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “It can be hard to do, but he’s been consistent. He’s a big man and he knows how to play and he knows what his role is, both at five-on-five and on the power play and he’s been playing it.”

Niederreiter has bounced between the second and third lines and currently finds himself skating alongside Jonathan Toews and Gustav Nyquist.

“I’ve been playing with (Lowry) for quite a long time, and having different centermen is something you’ve got to get used to,” said Niederreiter. “But at the same time, everybody plays the same system, so we kind of know exactly what we’re supposed to do out there.”

Given his the length of his tenure with the Jets, Niederreiter was asked if he’s been helping Toews and Nyquist adapt to that system.

“I’m still the youngest out of those three. So I always keep them honest that way,” Niederreiter joked. “Obviously, they’re new to the team, so we make sure we talk a lot. Tell them how we do things here and (what) things are supposed to look like. Each and every game, they feel like they’re getting better as well.”

**LAMBERT STAYING IN:** Although his ice time was limited due to a parade to the penalty box on Monday, Jets forward Brad Lambert is going to get another look on Thursday against the visiting Kraken.

“He’ll stay in the lineup,” said Arniel. “I liked a lot of what he did. Using his speed, he had a couple of looks there and (made) some plays down in the offensive zone. He was responsible without the puck and (stuck) to our structure. Hopefully it’s not such a penalty-filled game on Thursday.”

Lambert, who had one shot on goal and two shot attempts in 7:43 of ice time, skated with Vladislav Namestnikov and Alex Iafallo on Wednesday.

Jets centre Morgan Barron missed Wednesday’s workout and is officially listed as day-to-day with an undisclosed injury. Parker Ford took his spot on the fourth line with Cole Koepke and Tanner Pearson in practice.

**SCOUTING THE KRAKEN:** The Kraken lost 4-1 to the Washington Capitals on Tuesday, but they’re off to a 3-2-2 start to the campaign under new head coach Lane Lambert.

They’ve featured a balanced attack, with nine players already recording four or more points. Forwards Jayden Schwartz, Jordan Eberle and Chandler Stephenson and defenceman Vince Dunn all have five points to lead the offensive attack.

Berkley Catton, who was chosen eighth overall in the 2025 NHL Draft, chipped in an assist in his NHL debut against the Philadelphia Flyers on Monday.

The Kraken roster features three experienced goalies in Joey Daccord (who has made five starts), Philipp Grubauer (who has made one start and one relief appearance) and veteran Matt Murray (who has made one start).

Seattle has been dealing with a number of injuries of late, including defencemen Brandon Montour and Ryker Evans and forwards Jared McCann, Mason Marchment and Frederick Gaudreau.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/10/22/jets-penalty-kill-one-step-ahead>

***Jets' penalty kill one step ahead  
Savvy shorthanded play covers for early-season parade to sin bin***

By: Ken Wiebe

It's the type of conversation that makes NHL coaches uncomfortable, out of fear that discussing it will cause it to unravel.

So it's understandable when Winnipeg Jets head coach Scott Arniel brings humour into the equation when his sizzling-hot penalty kill is raised.

Arniel wants to keep most of the finer details to himself, out of fear of providing a subtle clue or two about what has made the unit so successful to a future opponent.

The other part of him has no interest in tempting fate, which makes sense when you consider the Jets have managed to kill off 23 consecutive minors and are 26-for-27 for the season while playing shorthanded.

This is mind-boggling stuff, especially when you consider two of the Jets most reliable penalty killers, captain Adam Lowry and defenceman Dylan Samberg, remain sidelined.

That's a testament to the tweaks Jets assistant coach Dean Chynoweth has made within the system and the personnel brought in by general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff to augment a group that moved from near the bottom of the NHL in penalty killing in 2023-24 to 13th overall last season.

Yet as the Jets prepare to host the Seattle Kraken on Thursday to open a three-game homestand at Canada Life Centre, the topic is impossible to ignore as it has clearly contributed to a five-game winning streak and a 5-1 start.

"Too many penalties," said Arniel. "We've had way too many opportunities to practice it."

Although Arniel made it clear he was joking, at least to a degree, there was plenty of truth attached to his words.

For a team that prided itself on not spending much time in the sin bin last season, the Jets have been shorthanded five times on four occasions, four times once, and three times in the other game they played.

That number can be reduced by placing a greater emphasis on being more disciplined, since stick infractions have accounted for 14 of the fouls the Jets have accrued and six interference minors have been called against them so far.

“For me, we always talk about checking with your legs. We’ve got to keep sticks off people,” said Arniel. “You get a little bit rattled at times when they’re in the offensive zone. Getting on the wrong side of people and then trying to use your stick to catch back up. Yeah, it does happen quite a bit.

“There’s a lot of calls early on in the season. Then, guys get a feel for what’s going on. There are areas we can clean up but if they’re aggressive penalties and there are things that happen to save goals, you have to do what you have to do. We can clean that up a little bit.”

What doesn’t require cleaning up is the job the Jets have been doing to ensure the increase in shorthanded situations hasn’t come back to bite them.

To date, the Jets have actually outscored their opponent 2-1 in four-on-five situations, which means they’ve been competing hard and winning a lot of one-on-one battles all over the ice.

“The big thing for me is that we look really in sync,” said Arniel. “All four guys, plus our goaltender, are all on the same page when it comes to reads, pressure points, working on retrievals, shared clears, and getting them down the ice.”

Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey believes improvements were actually made as last season wore on, though a barrage of early goals allowed made it difficult for the team to dig its way out of the hole it had dug for itself.

“We got off to a rough start last year and were kind of playing catch-up,” said Morrissey, whose shorthanded minutes have been elevated this season with Samberg on the shelf. “I think our PK was actually better last year at points than the numbers showed. It’s tough to quantify when the numbers are there.

“From Day 1 this year, it’s been an area of emphasis. We want to be a good penalty-killing team. The PK is kind of a thankless job. You don’t often get a lot of accolades for being out there and (you’re) doing the sort of dirty work, blocking shots, winning battles — all the intangibles that go into a good PK. It’s been awesome to see the effort level and commitment level on our kill.”

The effort and commitment levels are evident throughout the lineup, as the Jets have integrated new players up front such as Cole Koepke, Tanner Pearson, Jonathan Toews as well as Parker Ford when he’s been in the lineup.

Morgan Barron has taken on an elevated role, Alex Iafallo and Vladislav Namestnikov are getting their regular reps and Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele are contributing here as well.

On the back end, Dylan DeMelo and Neal Pionk have eclipsed 20 minutes while shorthanded, while Luke Schenn (15:22) and Haydn Fleury (12:10) have also been supported by Morrissey and Logan Stanley.

Naturally, the goaltending has been excellent here as well.

The lone goal to be scored against the Jets penalty killers came five seconds after Pionk exited the penalty box to turn a 5-on-3 disadvantage into a 5-on-4.

When a team enjoys as much success on the penalty kill as the Jets have, the opposition will be scouring the film to look for places they can try to attack.

Since the Jets have a potent power play that has scored in five consecutive games and currently sits third in the NHL (with a 30.0 per cent efficiency rating), they also have a good idea of the areas they're trying to protect on the ice to limit the number of high-danger chances against.

"There's only so many looks that come from a power play," said Arniel. "If the PK knows that if a certain team is in a setup, if that's a one-three-one or an overload one-timer set, we have an idea where the next plays are. That's being one step ahead. When it goes to the goal line, what are his options going to be and who are going to be the most dangerous people? We know it's not going to be the guy at the blue line.

"So, it's the reads that happen. We kind of anticipate or have an idea of what their next plays are going to be."

When the reads are right and players are in sync all over the ice, remarkable runs are possible, like the one the Jets are riding.

### **NHL Network**

<https://wscclipsscus.prod-cdn.clippro.tv/videos/3a7a26f3-cf45-4426-970e-597ff47c6d29.mp4>

### ***GM Kevin Cheveldayoff discussing the Winnipeg Jets start to the season (VIDEO)***

Kevin Cheveldayoff joins the First Shift crew to discuss the Winnipeg Jets start to the season. They cover adding a future Hall of Famer Jonathan Toews, his play to date, securing a long-term deal with Kyle Connor, what were the selling features, health updates and more.

### **Global Winnipeg**

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11489002/analysis-winnipeg-jets-scheifele-olympic-edmonds/>

### ***ANALYSIS: Jets' Scheifele playing his way to Olympic consideration***

By Paul Edmonds CJOB

It would be impossible to think Doug Armstrong and Jon Cooper are oblivious to what's happening in Winnipeg right now with Mark Scheifele.

The general manager and head coach, respectively, of Canada's entry into the 2026 Winter Olympics in February are no doubt paying close attention to Jets centre's start to the new NHL season.

In fact, he's forcing them to.

What Scheifele is displaying is a motivated body of work that includes not only a torrid offensive start to this season, but also a pace he created from last February on when he was left off Canada's active roster at the 4 Nations Face-Off.

It was a snub that upset Scheifele, for sure. But one that also possessed him to prove the detractors wrong from that moment on and through the lead-up to the upcoming February Olympics in Italy.

Since the 4 Nations omission, the 32-year-old Jets centre has been better than a point-per-game player in both the regular season and the playoffs, and his seven goals and 10 points to lead Winnipeg out of the gate this season are a major factor in its 5-1 start.

Now, Scheifele likely won't win the Art Ross Trophy this year or become the first Jets NHLer since Teemu Selanne to record 100 points in a season, but a career year might make it close.

As for Armstrong and Cooper, who were both involved in picking Canada's team last year at the 4 Nations, there are plenty of personnel decisions to make over the next three-plus months.

One of those, of course, will be on Scheifele, who is versatile, talented, competitive, elite and, again, motivated. And if Canada misses for a second time on the Jets star, especially with the way he's started this season, we might need a national summit to find out why.

Because nobody around the NHL could be that oblivious to what's happening in Winnipeg right now with Mark Scheifele.

### **Sportsnet.ca**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/how-mark-scheifele-and-the-jets-are-finding-early-success/>

### ***How Mark Scheifele and the Jets are finding early success***

By Adam Vingan

Mark Scheifele couldn't have asked for a better start to this season.

Over the weekend, Scheifele surpassed mentor Blake Wheeler as the Winnipeg Jets' all-time points leader. On Monday, he scored for the fifth consecutive game in Winnipeg's win against the Calgary Flames — his longest goal streak since February 2022.

And to top it all off, the Jets, who won the Presidents' Trophy last season with 116 points, are back near the top of the standings after winning five in a row.

"He's been such a consistent player," Jets coach Scott Arniel told reporters after Scheifele broke Wheeler's record. "He has such great offensive skills and instincts."

Scheifele, 32, is out to prove that his 39 goals and career-high 87 points last season were not an outlier (and that he deserves a spot on Team Canada at the Winter Olympics). Truthfully, it will be difficult for him to continue scoring on 26.9 per cent of his shot attempts — more than double his rate from last season (11.9 per cent). But he is getting to the high-danger scoring areas far more frequently, which could allow him to maintain his inflated shooting percentage for a little longer.

Roughly 80 per cent of Scheifele's shot attempts (21 of 26) have come from the slot. Only Montreal's Juraj Slafkovsky (82.8 per cent) has taken a higher percentage of his shots from the slot out of the 144 forwards with at least 20 attempts this season. (Last season, 64.2 per cent of Scheifele's shot attempts came from the slot, leading to 33 of his 39 goals.)

After netting the game-winning goal against the Flames on Monday, Scheifele credited his linemates, Kyle Connor and Gabriel Vilardi, for helping to spark his blazing-hot start. Winnipeg has outscored its opponents 5-2 at 5-on-5 over the 69-plus minutes when its top line has been on the ice. Connor has been setting up Scheifele exquisitely, feeding him on all three of his one-timer goals.

Connor, Scheifele and Vilardi have picked up where they left off last season, when they formed the highest-scoring line in the NHL with 50 on-ice goals at 5-on-5. But it is worth noting that they have not dominated territorially. The Jets have generated 44.6 per cent of the expected goals at 5-on-5 during the top line's minutes, compared to 51.5 per cent a season ago.

Collectively, the Jets have a 37.2 xGF% at 5-on-5, including a league-worst 8.06 expected goals for (1.81 per 60 minutes). Scheifele's goal-scoring frenzy has helped prop up the Jets, as has the play of reigning Hart Trophy winner Connor Hellebuyck, who has already stolen three games this season based on the number of goals he has saved above expected. Hellebuyck has recorded steals in each of his past two starts, saving a combined six goals above expected against the Flames and Nashville Predators.

Most of Hellebuyck's best work has been done on the penalty kill, where he has saved 6.6 of his league-leading 9.5 goals above expected. That is why Winnipeg has stopped a league-best 96.3 per cent of opposing power plays despite ranking 26th in shorthanded shot quality against per two minutes.

"When you have (Hellebuyck) in net or (Eric Comrie), you trust in those guys so much," said Scheifele, who is averaging a career-high 1:18 of shorthanded ice time per game. "I'm still getting used to it. There's still some bad reads that I make out there and (have) got to clean up."

It isn't easy following up on a Presidents' Trophy season. Since 2005-06 (excluding shortened seasons), the winners of that award have averaged around a 15-point decline the year after finishing atop the league standings.

The Jets' good fortune is bound to run out eventually, but the good news is that critical reinforcements are on the way in the form of key defensive forward/captain Adam Lowry, top-six winger Cole Perfetti and top-four defenceman Dylan Samberg. All three will bolster the Jets' lineup. In the meantime, Winnipeg will continue to lean on Scheifele and Hellebuyck as the team banks points that could prove critical come April.

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/juniors/article/prospects-report-beijing-native-kevin-he-hopes-to-continue-making-history/>

### ***Prospects Report: Beijing native Kevin He hopes to continue making history***

By Mike Koreen

Jason He had to pinch himself.



Sitting in a packed Bell Centre last month, He gazed down and saw his son, Kevin, playing for the Winnipeg Jets in a prospects-tournament game against the Montreal Canadiens.

About 13 years ago, the accountant and his family (wife Queenie, Kevin and younger son Eric) moved to Montreal from Beijing for a career and life change. It offered Jason the chance to expose his sons more to a sport he fell in love with while mastering French as an international university student in Moncton, N.B.

"Very proud. The game was sold out, and it was just unbelievable feelings," Jason recalled over the phone from his home in King City, Ont., recently. "I took them 10, 12 years ago to watch the Habs play. We were playing minor hockey, and somehow they had tickets for around \$10. Now, they're big men playing in the Bell Centre at the national level. It's amazing."

Kevin He, 19, is doing everything in his power to ensure there are more special moments ahead.

A fourth-round pick of the Jets in 2024 after Winnipeg traded up to grab the Buffalo Sabres' selection, the Niagara IceDogs winger became the first Chinese-born player to sign an NHL contract last December, months after making his pre-season debut in Edmonton.

He got into another pre-season game this year, notching an assist at home against the Minnesota Wild, and has maintained his momentum in the OHL. The six-foot team captain has four goals and nine assists in seven games for the Central Division-leading IceDogs.

"It was a huge confidence boost, going to camp for a second time (with the Jets)," He said. "You watch those guys growing up, to be out there training with them, practising with them, just trying to learn as much as I can."

Last week in a showcase game against the loaded Brantford Bulldogs, He had a goal and two assists on an impressive line with Tampa Bay Lightning prospect Ethan Czata and talented 2025 OHL first-round pick Ryerson Edgar.

On his goal, He caused a Bulldogs turnover in the defensive zone and raced down the wing before beating Sabers prospect goalie Ryerson Leenders from the faceoff circle.

"He's played well. Straight ahead, stops and starts, playing on the D side of the puck but with that he's got explosive speed," first-year IceDogs coach Krys Barch said after the team's 7-4 loss to the Bulldogs in St. Catharines, Ont. "He can really turn a game around or separate it for us. He's been a huge element coming back and a great example for all the young guys."

When He returned from Jets camp, he asked Barch if he could play on a line with Edgar. In the coach's mind, that was a wonderful sign of leadership. For He, it simply was the right thing to do.

"I can relate to one of the only 16-year-olds. I was the only 16-year-old year my first year," He said. "I understand he may be a little shy at the start, but I really like his game right now. I can see he has a really good compete level. Just want to be able to help him out and do what I can to help someone find his game. I think he's on the right track."

While Edgar grew up in Holland Landing, Ont. (not far from where Connor McDavid learned the game), He didn't have a traditional hockey upbringing.

Kevin and Eric first took strides on rollerblades, with ice limited in Beijing. Jason eventually found them some ice, but it was hard to come by.

The move to Montreal, where Jason was celebrating on the streets while working a summer job when the Habs last won the Stanley Cup in 1993, changed that.

The family moved to the Toronto area when Kevin was 12 before the IceDogs picked him in the second round (25th overall) of the 2022 OHL Draft.

"I think his passion, that's the No. 1 thing," Jason said. "Passion makes you work harder, compete better, and go to the next level. Passion is everything, it comes from the heart. ... I think skill is the second (most important aspect to hockey), passion is the first."

After a summer spent working with trainer-to-the-stars Matt Nichol — "He's been great. Not just a gym coach, but a mentor as well," — He has devoted himself to improving his play at both ends of the ice.

While we know plus-minus may not be a tell-all stat, He's rating is a plus-8 this season after being a combined minus-34 in his first three years in the OHL.

The main message from the Jets has been to work on his 200-foot game.

"I think that's where my head's at right now," He said. "I think I have a good foundation, my speed and strength and what not. Obviously, get a little bigger, fill out a little bit more. Really kind of just lock down the defence and fit the system."

After four seasons without any playoff success and several off-ice organizational controversies, the IceDogs are hoping to turn the corner this year under Barch and new GM Frank Evola. He wants to play a big role in that turnaround before hopefully making a full-time jump to the pros next season.

As Kevin takes each step, his dad will be watching with pride.

"It's a big dream come true," Jason He said. "I've been a big hockey fan for years. I've been watching Hockey Night in Canada for years. I never imagined or dreamed my son would play at that high a level."

**TSN.ca**

<https://www.tsn.ca/video/2025/10/22/who-deserves-most-credit-for-jets-hot-start/>

***Who deserves most credit for Jets' hot start? (VIDEO)***

Flying out of the gates to a 5-1-0 start to the season, the Jets sit two points behind the Avs for first in the Central. What has been the secret to Winnipeg's success, and who deserves the most credit? TSN's Danielle Bain joins Gino Reda with more.

## **The Athletic**

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6740737/2025/10/23/projecting-jets-lineup-lowry-samberg-perfetti/>

### ***Projecting Winnipeg's 'optimal' lineup when Lowry, Samberg, Perfetti return***

By Murat Ates

Scott Arniel is so antsy to dress a full roster that he interrupted Sean Reynolds' question, posing a question of his own.

Reynolds was comparing Arniel's consistency with last year's lines and pairings — no team kept its lines more fixed than Winnipeg — to Arniel's early-season experimentation. Arniel, excited by his team's improving health, couldn't help himself from reframing things.

"Would I like to have (Adam) Lowry and (Cole) Perfetti and (Dylan) Samberg?" Arniel asked.

Arniel's question was rhetorical, answered by an obvious, unspoken "yes." It's also one that he's going to have the opportunity to sort out in just a couple of weeks' time. Lowry is practicing with his teammates, wearing a non-contact jersey as he progresses in his recovery from hip surgery. Perfetti is ahead of schedule as he recovers from his ankle injury, skating with Samberg separately from the rest of the team.

Lowry is expected to the lineup first — likely in time for the Jets' six-game November road trip starting in Los Angeles. Perfetti is trending toward a mid-November return, either toward the end of that trip or the homestand that follows it. Samberg could follow close behind.

This piece is an early look at the Jets' attempt at optimal lines and pairs. Winnipeg is 5-1-0 via sterling special teams and goaltending, but needs the help of Lowry, Perfetti and Samberg at even strength.

What will Arniel do — and what should he do — when everybody is healthy?

#### ***Winnipeg's forward lines (so far)***

Take a look at all Jets lines who've played at least 10 minutes together. There are two alarming trends and one fun one.

Connor-Scheifele-Vilardi

69.4

28

40

5

2

Niederreiter-Namestnikov-Nyquist

30.0

12

13

2

1

Koepke-Barron-Pearson

17.5

5  
 9  
 1  
 1  
 Iafallo-Toews-Pearson  
 17.1  
 2  
 11  
 0  
 1  
 Koepke-Barron-Ford  
 15.4  
 4  
 0  
 0  
 0  
 Niederreiter-Toews-Nyquist  
 14.9  
 4  
 6  
 1  
 1  
 Iafallo-Toews-Chibrikov  
 13.8  
 3  
 8  
 0  
 1

There's only one Jets line to outshoot its opposition in the small sample size that is this season. Cole Koepke, Morgan Barron and Parker Ford have played together for just over 15 minutes at five-on-five, most recently against Nashville on Saturday. Barron is out day-to-day with an undisclosed injury, reminding us that picking lines is a little bit like playing Whack-A-Mole: It's normal for new problems to pop up all the time.

There is a line that's scorching its opponents on the scoresheet — and yes, it's the obvious one. Kyle Connor, Mark Scheifele and Gabriel Vilardi are lighting it up, despite getting dramatically outshot, thanks to counterattacks like this one:

All but one of the top line's even-strength goals have been scored in transition, whether right off the zone entry or on a counterattack (like the goal Scheifele scored when Vilardi intercepted Philadelphia's breakout attempt.) These shots are more dangerous than average, letting some of the fear out of their poor underlying numbers to start the season, but the Jets have struggled to control play in the offensive zone.

Jonathan Toews told reporters in Calgary that Winnipeg's other lines feel the pressure to add secondary scoring "so we can help those guys out and not have to rely on them every single night."

Toews is off to a good start on the power play, but the Jets need Perfetti back if they want to give Toews a realistic shot at productive even-strength offence. Perfetti was the Jets' fifth-most

productive forward at five-on-five last season, rising to fourth if you remove Nikolaj Ehlers. There are reasons to believe that Toews and Perfetti will play well together, given each player's intelligent approach to the game. The challenge will be finding the right complement to join them.

Winnipeg's other top scorers so far are Barron, whose early-season heater is gathering acclaim, and Nino Niederreiter, featured in this piece about veterans having bounce-back years.

What should Winnipeg do when Lowry and Perfetti come back?

#### *Winnipeg's optimal forward group*

There are two forward pairs that I view as inseparable on the Jets' roster: Connor and Scheifele, along with Niederreiter and Lowry.

That's not to say Winnipeg can have success only with those duos playing together. Connor and Scheifele are automatic right now, scoring seemingly at will, but there was a time a few seasons back when they didn't consistently win their minutes — and Winnipeg won games anyway. The Jets have also had success playing Niederreiter and Lowry away from each other, like the hot streak Niederreiter is on now.

Toews and Perfetti are an unknown entity together thus far, but I still expect Arniel to build his roster around pairs that look like this:

Kyle Connor  
Mark Scheifele  
Cole Perfetti  
Jonathan Toews  
Nino Niederreiter  
Adam Lowry

Vilardi is a virtual lock to join Connor and Scheifele on the top line. Gustav Nyquist is first in line to play with Toews and Perfetti. But Arniel has plenty of options available to him, knowing that Vladislav Namestnikov and Alex Iafallo have played top-six minutes recently (and Tanner Pearson has experience up the lineup, too.) Barron might be due for more opportunity than he's getting and, while Brad Lambert and Nikita Chibrikov have been non-factors in the Jets' success, it's possible Winnipeg will give them more chances to prove they belong.

It's wild to think that Koepke might not make the Jets' idealized playoff lineup, but Arniel has invoked Pearson's name ever so slightly more frequently when discussing role players and veteran leadership. Pearson was impressive to me at camp, unimpressive in preseason and then effective in a fourth-line role once the regular season began in earnest.

My guess is that Nyquist joins Toews' line and Namestnikov joins Lowry. "Optimal" might involve giving Barron a longer look further up the lineup.

Probably the most important thing that Arniel could do is to come up with a variety of looks, such that when playoff adversity strikes — as it always does — he has tried and true alternatives to lean on.

#### *Defence (today)*

A quick look at Winnipeg's defence pairs drives home the need for Samberg. Josh Morrissey and Dylan DeMelo are keeping things close to level in terms of shots, zone time and expected goals, but they are the only ones.

Morrissey-DeMelo

80.6

27

30

3

2

Stanley-Pionk

56.5

14

32

2

1

Fleury-Schenn

30.8

11

11

0

2

Fleury-Pionk

24.1

3

11

0

2

Stanley-Schenn

16.3

3

11

0

0

Morrissey-DeMelo are the only Jets pair above 30 percent in expected goals, according to Evolving Hockey. That's a problem, because the long run favours quality shots turning into real goals in the long run more than Logan Stanley scoring on 50 percent of the shots he takes (compared with his career average of 3 percent). That's not to say Stanley and Neal Pionk haven't done good things — or that there's an obviously superior solution available. Stanley's physicality has been welcome, along with the goals he's scored, while Pionk is among the minutes leaders on Winnipeg's No. 1-ranked penalty kill.

Another positive is that DeMelo is back to making plays in his own zone that look like this one:

It might be a while before we can be sure about a bounce back, but DeMelo took a step backward last season that he is working to put behind him.

The third pair has been interesting to watch. It's easier to keep Haydn Fleury and Luke Schenn away from opposing teams' top lines than it is to shelter Winnipeg's top four, so you'd ideally want them to have the kinds of metrics that Stanley and Colin Miller had last season (48 percent

of shots, 54 percent of expected goals). There's a clear hierarchy; Miller has played just one game this season.

How can Winnipeg get back to its best?

#### *Winnipeg's optimal defence corps*

It's tempting to think that air-dropping Samberg into the Jets' defence corps will turn its metrics right around. Go through the start of 2025-26 and the two full seasons that preceded it and find that Pionk's best results come with Samberg on his left side. It might also be argued that Pionk has excelled with Morrissey, but those minutes are a little bit different: The Morrissey-Pionk pairing comes out primarily when the Jets are trailing late in games.

As a result of those unique circumstances, we don't particularly know if Morrissey-Pionk and Samberg-DeMelo would outperform the current deployment.

We do know that the numbers from Stanley and Miller on a less injured, more effective five-on-five team were better last season than anything we've seen on the Jets' third pairing this year. Schenn provides leadership, experience and a certain type of physicality. Miller might provide a superior option on the Jets' third pair.

This will eventually be a moot point as Elias Salomonsson begins his NHL career. I think the Jets will take a long, long look at him at the AHL level before they displace a veteran for him — perhaps not until early next season.

Some believe Stanley's early-season success implies he's arrived as a top-four defenceman. I'm inclined to stay patient on that one, waiting for the underlying numbers to look a little less miserable, although it's been fun to watch him step up.

#### *Winnipeg's optimal playoff roster*

I continue to see two primary holes on Winnipeg's playoff roster. The first is a player with an Iafallo-esque motor and Perfetti- and Toews-esque hockey IQ to help drive play on the second line. The second is a physical defenceman who can play further up the lineup, to greater success, than Stanley or Schenn have shown.

As it stands, here is one look at "optimal," following the roster rules we discussed above.

Kyle Connor	Mark Scheifele	Gabriel Vilardi
Alex Iafallo	Jonathan Toews	Cole Perfetti
Nino Niederreiter	Adam Lowry	Vladislav Namestnikov
Tanner Pearson	Morgan Barron	Gustav Nyquist
Cole Koepke	Parker Ford	

LD	RD
Josh Morrissey	Dylan DeMelo
Dylan Samberg	Neal Pionk
Logan Stanley	Colin Miller
Luke Schenn	

G  
Connor Hellebuyck  
Eric Comrie

This roster puts some very good players further down the lineup than might be ideal, demotes Lambert and Chibrikov to the AHL and could still use an upgrade by the fourth-ranked front office in the NHL.

Perhaps the best thing Winnipeg can do once everyone gets healthy is to take multiple looks at multiple options instead of operating as consistently as Reynolds pointed out about last season.

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6740073/2025/10/23/nhl-front-office-rankings-quotes-2025/>

### ***NHL front-office rankings: Every quote from the 37 execs surveyed in 2025***

By The Athletic

As we did last year, we acknowledge right off the hop that this article isn't going to be for everyone.

If you're looking for a distillation of the consensus from NHL execs on the league's top front offices, Wednesday's front-office rankings were probably enough for you.

If you're a hockey diehard and can't get enough of execs' thoughts about their colleagues, though, or a fan of one of the top-ranking teams who wants to read every last word we collected about your team's front office, we do have more, redundant though it might be.

Surveying 37 NHL execs — with anonymity granted for the sake of being able to speak freely — The Athletic collected more than 1,500 words of insight into which of their peers they are most impressed with and why.

For Wednesday's article, we used only the most relevant quotes for every top-10 team. Here, we'll present the execs' full quotes, uncut.

#### ***4. Winnipeg Jets***

Total points: 77 (appeared on 21 ballots)

Owner: Mark Chipman

GM: Kevin Cheveldayoff

Last year: 16

*Second-place vote, West president of hockey ops:* "Small staff produces big results. Strong player evaluation at pro and amateur level. Despite small market challenges, they're able to retain top talent."

*Third-place vote, East GM who used a few words to describe each of his picks:* "Efficient."

*Fourth-place vote, East front-office exec:* "In a market where you would assume it's a constant turnover of players once they reach free agency, they continue to get good players to sign and stay."

*Fifth-place vote, West AGM:* "They have no geographical or financial advantages, but they've built a quality team that has had a lot of success. They are able to retain their stars. And they've been able to make quality trades."



Fifth-place vote, East GM: "Chevy's done a great job."

*Fifth-place vote, East front-office exec:* "The job that group has done to stay competitive in that market is impressive. Compare it to Calgary, Ottawa, Edmonton, Montreal, Vancouver, who have all had dips (and bigger peaks). Frugal with staff, but very loyal, very tight group, and while they haven't broken through, to remain competitive like that is impressive."