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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/perfetti-canadians-celebrate-marner-ot-winner>

***Perfetti, Canadians celebrate Marner OT winner  
Perfetti: "That was fun to watch."***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – The Winnipeg Jets had their second consecutive practice after their Olympic break at hockey for all centre on Wednesday. Unlike yesterday, Canada was in action in the quarterfinal matchup with Czechia. The game started at 9:40 central time and the Jets started around 10 minutes before 11.

As the players started to come off the ice and into their dressing room, Ondrej Palat gave Czechia their second lead of the game with 7:42 remaining in the third period. Nick Suzuki would tie the game at 16:33 for Canada and that meant overtime. Much like the 4 Nations Face-Off championship game, Jordan Binnington came up with a huge save and that opened the door for Mitch Marner to send the Canadians into the semis.

"Yeah, that was good. That was fun to watch," said Cole Perfetti.

"Three on three, with those guys on the ice, it's fun to watch. Happy Canada won."

Perfetti who knows a little something about scoring highlight reel goals, was impressed with the magic that Marner pulled off to give Canada the win.

"That was a great play, obviously. His deception and he kind of looked like he was going to not attack there," said Perfetti.

"And then just to find a little hole and split the gap there and then a little chip-shot backhand, that was nice."

There were multiple Jets players who were pushing for the upset.

"If you're not Canadian, no one wants to see Canada do well in hockey," said Perfetti.

"So, there's a few guys that were Czech fans today, so it was fun little banter."

Josh Morrissey missed his third consecutive game even though it looked like he would be back in the lineup. Now if he comes back, it will be in the semis against Finland. Despite the fact that it will be over a week since Morrissey will have played his last game, Jets head coach Scott Arniel doesn't think that will be a problem.

"The biggest thing about him is ability to move and to skate. And that's his best attribute. So, there'll be lots of nerves, I'm sure, but I'm really hoping that he gets back in the next game, really hoping to see him," said Arniel.

"So, I thought maybe today would be the day. But, yeah, gives them some fresh legs, hopefully, and he can enjoy that experience."

## OLYMPIC UPDATE

The Americans did their part to keep the Canada-USA gold medal game alive; Connor Hellebuyck made 28 saves and Quinn Hughes scored 3:27 into overtime as the US beat Sweden 2-1. Hellebuyck and company will face Slovakia in the other semi-final, the Slovaks knocked off Germany 6-2.

Kyle Connor didn't dress for a second consecutive game for the US.

"I know deep down that KC wants to get in there," said Arniel.

"And we'll see. Let's see what happens in the next two games. Hopefully he gets to be a part of it."

Nino Niederreiter gave Switzerland a 2-0 lead at 15:26 of the first period over Finland, but the Finns scored three unanswered goals including Artturi Lehkonen's overtime winner at 3:23.

## **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/02/18/nothing-but-good-things-to-say-about-the-organization>

***'Nothing but good things to say about the organization'  
Towering defenceman Stanley would love to stick with team that drafted him***

By: Ken Wiebe

Logan Stanley has been around long enough to know that, in the NHL, deadlines usually spur action.

And with the March 6 NHL trade deadline rapidly approaching, Stanley recognizes he is both a prime candidate for a contract extension and a valuable trade chip — if a dollar value and term cannot be reached at some point during the next several weeks — as he is a pending unrestricted free agent on July 1 for the first time in his career.

The towering defenceman has spent the past decade in the Winnipeg Jets organization after being chosen 18th overall in the 2016 NHL draft and he's done his part to enhance his value on both fronts by delivering career-highs in goals (nine) and points (18) through 55 games this season.

"I think they are going to have a conversation here in the coming days. What that entails, we'll see. I'll leave that to my agent Pat (Morris) to deal with," Stanley said during a one-on-one conversation on Wednesday afternoon. "I love playing here. It's been my home and this organization treats everyone like family."

The one thing about the situation Stanley finds himself in is that there's no playbook on how to navigate the potential potholes.

"Nope," Stanley conceded. "I haven't (sought) out any advice. You lean on your family and friends. The guys are good."

"Everyone knows what is going on. Everybody sees the rumours and what-not. I'll just take it day-by-day and see how it plays out."

During the course of the conversation, Stanley was quick to acknowledge the growing pains he's endured during his time with the Jets, which have included several frustrating injuries and frequent healthy scratches at various points in his career.

But after finding his footing last season, Stanley has taken his game to another level.

"I've grown up here since I was 20. I've been here eight years now," said Stanley. "It's a good league and there have been some setbacks, with injuries, that didn't help. That following year, just being so healthy all year but it was tough to get games. I'm grateful they were patient and I thought last year I built my game a little bit and got that good feeling back. This year has obviously been another good step in the right direction."

Stanley has been open and honest about his willingness to continue to build on his offensive growth while digging in to ensure his defensive game takes another step forward.

"You're never satisfied. There's always something in the game that you can improve," said Stanley. "If you had 20 good shifts and one bad one, you want to eliminate that (bad one). There are always ways to improve. If you have an off night, you regroup the next morning and forget about it."

"Over the course of 82 games, you're going to have a stinker or two or three. It's just about trying to stay consistent and be reliable. I've done a pretty good job of that."

Stanley's progression has caught the attention of his teammates.

"He's been fantastic. Obviously, his offensive numbers are speaking for themselves," said Jets forward Cole Perfetti. "You guys see that, a career-high in goals and points. He's playing great offensively, but his defensive game has also been fantastic. He's been a rock back there."

"He's such a big guy. He's hard to go in the corner with, his stick is so long that it's hard to attack him. And then, when he has the patience and the poise to then get the puck, hold a guy off or find the first read or the second read and make the play, it's dangerous."

Jets head coach Scott Arniel has worked with Stanley throughout the past four seasons, running the defence corps for the first two when he was an associate coach on Rick Bowness' staff.

Arniel has been impressed with how Stanley has handled the additional responsibilities heaped upon him this season, which has led to him averaging a career-high 16:33 of ice time (up substantially from his 15:09 career average).

"With the team aspect, we'd like to be in a different position," said Stanley. "But it's been fun to enjoy the good times personally. You're just trying to improve your game every day and build on it."

"The more I'm on the ice, the better my game is because you're into it and your legs are going. It's not easy to play every fifth or sixth shift. That's been huge."

Stanley believes another reason for his pivotal step forward was related to his off-season training, as he worked hard to shed between 10 and 12 pounds, moving from around 240 pounds to between 228 and 232.

The idea was to add some agility at a time when the pace of the game continues to rise.

“My straight away speed is a little better. It’s not that I’m flying around out there, but it makes a difference, for sure,” said Stanley. “For me, I still have my strength and you don’t want to lose that. To be a little quicker and more agile has helped.”

The meteoric rise to approaching double digits in goals after five consecutive one-goal campaigns is impressive in itself, but Stanley’s offensive explosion hasn’t included a massive rise in risk profile. And scoring early in the season built some confidence that’s spilled over into other aspects of his game.

“One hundred per cent. It translates through the whole game,” said Stanley. “You feel confident with breakouts and playing in the D-zone, which is something I’m still trying to improve on and develop.

“Finishing plays quickly and being able to make that first pass. The hardest part in our game is breaking the puck out... so that’s another thing where it’s important that I’m a little lighter, a little quicker, so you have that extra half second to make that play.”

With the clock ticking, it won’t be long before finding out if Stanley will remain with the Jets or potentially find himself with a new home for the stretch drive.

Especially when you consider Stanley’s US\$1.25 million annual average value, there should be a fairly long line of suitors for his services if the Jets can’t get him signed to an extension.

“If something else comes along, that’s the business part of it and it’s out of your control,” said Stanley. “But I have nothing but good things to say about the organization.

“I would love to stay. I’ve made that clear to my agent. We’ll see what transpires in the coming weeks.”

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/02/18/hellebuyck-stands-tall-for-team-usa>

### ***Hellebuyck stands tall for Team USA Jets’ netminder backstops U.S. to overtime win over Swedes***

By: Mike McIntyre

MILAN — The occasion was not too big for Connor Hellebuyck.

The Winnipeg Jets netminder, who also happens to be the reigning Hart and Vezina Trophy winner, should have silenced critics Wednesday who claim he shrinks when the stakes get higher.

Hellebuyck was calm, cool and collected, stopping 28 of 29 shots as the United States survived a scare from Sweden, winning 2-1 in overtime to avoid Olympic elimination and advance to the medal round.

"It's one of those moments where you'll look back at years down the road and just be so proud to be a part of it," Hellebuyck said.

Dylan Larkin gave the Americans a 1-0 lead midway through the second period and, for a while, it looked like that might be enough. But with Swedish goaltender Jacob Markstrom pulled for an extra attacker, Mika Zibanejad's one-timer with 91 seconds left in regulation snuck past a surprised Hellebuyck.

"I was trying to figure out how it went in because I thought I made a really good push and feel like I should have had the save," said Hellebuyck.

"My first thought is it went through the outside of the net. So, after realizing that it didn't I was able to throw it away because, you know, there's more hockey to be played."

Not a whole lot of hockey, it turned out. Quinn Hughes beat Markstrom just 3:27 into three-on-three overtime.

"I thought we were the better team for the majority of that game. That being said, their goalie played great and they played their game, too," Hellebuyck said of not losing focus despite the late goal.

"You're playing a good game, you feel like you deserve to win. It's hockey. You don't shut out every single night. If you're playing the right way and feel like you should win, you usually get the result."

Hughes, who was traded by the Vancouver Canucks to the Minnesota Wild in a mid-season blockbuster, showed why he is arguably one of the best defencemen on the planet.

"A beautiful step in, and just a perfect shot, off the low post and in, low glove," Hellebuyck said of the winner.

He admits he's not a fan of settling high-stakes games with three-on-three overtime — as happened in three of Wednesday's four quarterfinals — but acknowledges it's a necessary evil.

"In a short tournament like this, you kind of have to have it. Especially with so many teams playing, it could drag out a game and really ruin the schedule and ruin rest and give someone an unfair advantage for the future rounds," said Hellebuyck.

"It stinks, but we're all in the same boat."

Hellebuyck has now stopped 68 of 71 shots in three tournament games, posting a .958 save percentage and a 1.00 goals-against average. He credited the team in front of him.

"They're just incredible. Everyone plays their role so strong and they let me see pucks and they clear rebounds. And they just make my life so much easier," he said.

Jets forward Kyle Connor, who went without a point or a shot in the first two U.S. games, was a healthy scratch for a second straight outing.

Team USA will face a surprising Slovakia squad on Friday (2:10 p.m. CT).

"They're playing out of their minds right now. They're playing absolutely incredible. They've had a really tough bracket, the toughest bracket, and they came out of it on top," said forward Matthew Tkachuk.

"They've got some guys playing at an all-world level, guys that are in the NHL and guys that are not. So it's gonna be a huge, huge test for us. At this point of the tournament, anything can happen. Their goalie is playing incredible, our goalie is playing incredible, and it's gonna make for a hell of a semifinal."

The dream of an American-Canadian showdown is still alive. Canada meets Finland in the other semifinal (Friday, 9:40 a.m. CT), after the Finns rallied from a 2-0 deficit to beat Switzerland 3-2 in overtime. Jets forward Nino Niederreiter scored for the Swiss, but it wasn't enough to extend his Olympics.

The semifinal losers will play for bronze on Saturday (1:40 p.m. CT), the winners for gold on Sunday (7:10 a.m. CT) to conclude the Games.

"Just pumped we get to keep this thing going," said Jack Hughes, who along with his brother assisted on Larkin's goal.

"You don't want to end it in the quarters. That's a great team over there, and I don't think anyone saw us playing them in the quarters at the start of the tournament. Whoever it was, a great team was going to be eliminated, and we wanted to keep this thing going. It's the best hockey, the Olympics. It's fun to keep it rolling."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/02/18/that-was-an-awesome-ending>

***'That was an awesome ending'  
Banter ensues as Jets watch Oly quarterfinals after practice***

By: Ken Wiebe

The audible gasps were eventually replaced by sighs of relief.

As members of the Winnipeg Jets left the ice to catch the end of Canada's quarterfinal tilt with Czechia on Wednesday, there was some good-natured banter and occasional chirping taking place in various corners of the locker room inside Hockey For All Centre.

It turns out not everyone was actually rooting for the guys wearing the Maple Leaf on the front of the jersey.

"If you're not Canadian, no one wants to see Canada do well in hockey," said Jets forward Cole Perfetti. "So, there's a few guys that were Czech fans today, so it was fun little banter."

The on-ice session began close to half an hour early to provide the opportunity for Jets players and coaches to see the exciting conclusion, which featured a go-ahead goal for Czechia, a late

equalizer on a deft deflection from Nick Suzuki and an outstanding individual effort from Mitch Marner during three-on-three overtime action.

“Three on three, with those guys on the ice, it’s fun to watch. Happy Canada won,” said Perfetti. “That was a great play (by Marner), obviously. His deception, he kind of looked like he was going to not attack there, and then just to find a little hole and split the gap there and then, a little chip-shot backhand. That was nice.”

There was certainly some tension to sort through, but ultimately Canada was able to rally, rather than be knocked out in what would have been viewed as a massive upset.

Instead, Canada’s dream team is now assured of playing for a medal — and the gold remains in play.

“See, I look at it, that was an awesome ending,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “That’s one thing about when you have such elite players playing a tournament like that, (Jordan) Binnington making the save, and then just staying with it.

“It’s never over till it’s over and you don’t want to see them go through such a nail-biter, but at the end of day, it’s probably great for them, having not played for a couple of days and kind of getting right back in the heat of a game like that. That was pretty exciting. Obviously, it turned out the right way.”

The victory also leaves open the possibility of Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey getting back into Canada’s lineup for Friday’s semifinal (9:40 a.m. CT).

Morrissey has been out of action since suffering an undisclosed injury in the opening game of the Olympics.

“We’ve talked about it, with our team over the course of the year, you’re jumping into fast-moving waters,” Arniel said of the prospect of Morrissey’s return. “But I think with Josh, the biggest thing about him is the ability to move (the puck) and to skate. And that’s his best attribute.

“So there will be lots of nerves, I’m sure, but I’m really hoping that he gets back in the next game.”

Jets winger Nino Niederreiter scored his first goal of the Olympics on Wednesday, but Switzerland lost a heartbreaker, 3-2 in overtime to Finland after building a 2-0 lead.

Goalie Connor Hellebuyck and Team USA advanced to the semis with a win over Sweden, while Kyle Connor was a healthy scratch for a second consecutive game.

“I still think that he’s a guy you want in those games. In that third period when it’s a tight game, he’s a guy that’s a difference maker, that can put the puck in the back of the net,” said Arniel. “But, whatever their decision is there, why they’re doing it, I’m not sure. I don’t agree with it, but at the end of the day, I just hope that after (Wednesday’s) game, that maybe he gets a chance in the semifinal.”

Connor’s teammates feel for him being a healthy scratch, but understand the sacrifices that need to be made when playing on a talented team at such a high-profile event.

"When you're on the Olympic team I think there's so many great hockey players, there's so many good guys, and you're just there to be a team guy and support and try to win a medal as a team for your country," said Perfetti. "I know he's going to be a good teammate about it and be a good guy about it. I'm sure he wants to be in the lineup and be playing and be an impact guy like he is for us."

The Jets, who are 22-26-8 this season, went through a second workout since returning from the Olympic break and kept the focus on playing with pace.

Although the Jets aren't back in action until next Wednesday when they open a three-game road trip against the Vancouver Canucks, they recognize what facing an 11-point deficit with 26 games to go means.

"If you look at our schedule, we play a lot of teams that are in and around us or just above us, so we can make some ground up here," said Perfetti. "If we got off to a hot start, we can catch some teams early and start feeling good about ourselves. Like I said, all of those teams that are close in points, we all play each other."

"So, we've got to go out, do our job and win some games. In a matter of a couple of weeks, we could be right in there and right in that playoff spot."

### **Winnipeg Sun**

[https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg\\_jets/winnipeg-jets-witness-canadas-dramatic-olympic-victory/article\\_67ba6c6e-be7d-4b97-a088-89077e8f97c1.html](https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg_jets/winnipeg-jets-witness-canadas-dramatic-olympic-victory/article_67ba6c6e-be7d-4b97-a088-89077e8f97c1.html)

### ***'This is wild': How the Winnipeg Jets watched Canada's dramatic Olympic victory***

By Paul Friesen

It's early afternoon on Wednesday, the Winnipeg Jets trickling off the ice after a practice many of them probably wish had been rescheduled.

On one dressing room wall, a massive flatscreen. Only this time it wasn't being used to show game tape.

Instead, it was carrying the last several minutes of Team Canada's Olympic quarterfinal game against Czechia.

The game deadlocked at 2-2, the tension in the room was palpable.

"Pretty quiet in here," came a loud, joking voice from the far corner.

It was defenceman Dylan Samberg, a Minnesota native who clearly had no stake in the outcome.

Across the room, Mark Scheifele was the picture of focus, dressed in shorts and a T-shirt, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees and his eyes fixed on the screen.



There's no bigger hockey fan, make that hockey nerd, than Scheifele. He knew full well what this moment meant.

For the first time since 2014, NHL players are back in the Olympics, making it a true, best-player competition. Canada simply had to come out on top.

Scheifele had watched the first few minutes of the game before hitting the ice. He'd seen young star Macklin Celebrini give Canada the early lead.

Two first-period goals by Czechia followed by a second-period equalizer from Nathan MacKinnon had set up the third-period dramatics.

With less than eight minutes to go, there came, through a connecting doorway, a sound of despair from another room, where another group of players was watching.

It turns out their TV feed was earlier than the feed in the dressing room, because some 10 seconds later the source of their despair was played out for Scheifele and the others to see.

Ondrej Palat had given the Czechians the lead with 7:42 to go, sparking an audible group sigh from the Canadians seated in this room.

That's the sound that greeted defenceman Dylan DeMelo as he came off the ice. The London, Ont., native glanced at the screen, saw what had happened and bemoaned the bad karma he'd inadvertently brought to the proceedings.

"As soon as I walked in," DeMelo said, shaking his head.

Not everybody was down. Somebody said they saw a fist-pump from a non-Canadian player. Others just smiled. There were no audible cheers.

"I'm sure there were guys on our team that didn't want to see Canada win," Cole Perfetti said later. "If you're not Canadian, no one wants to see Canada do well in hockey. So there's a few guys that were Czech fans today. It was fun little banter."

The clock ticked down to five minutes to go, then four minutes, Canada still trailing.

During a TV timeout, Scheifele described how he was feeling.

"This is wild," he said. "This is wild. Just watching as a fan, it brings the nerves in me a little bit, that's for sure."

Scheifele, of course, had wanted a spot on this team, more than he's wanted almost anything else.

He didn't have to be in Italy, though, to realize the impact a loss would have, on both the national psyche and on the narrative that this remains Canada's game, a narrative he's clutched in his arms like a teddy bear since he was a kid growing up in Kitchener.

"Huge," he said. "Being a Canadian, it's gold or bust. It's ingrained in us from a young age. It's tough, obviously."

Scheifele left for the other room, and minutes later there came a cheer. Somebody said the name Suzuki.

On cue, the screen in the dressing room caught up to show Nick Suzuki tie it up with 3:27 to go.

"Where's Nyquist?" someone shouted, aiming a little poke at Swedish forward Gustav Nyquist, who apparently hadn't been on board the Canadian train.

The last few minutes, as tense as they were, settled nothing.

By the time the overtime started, there was just one player left in the dressing room, defenceman Logan Stanley, who'd been doing an interview.

He quickly jogged out to join teammates watching in the other room.

It didn't take long before the cheers came, with someone yelling, "Mitchy!"

Ten seconds later we saw it for ourselves, Mitch Marner the Canadian hero, averting lord knows what level of national angst over the national game.

"Where's Ville?" we could hear someone yell, a reference to Finnish defenceman Ville Heinola.

Heinola's own countrymen survived a scare against Nino Niederreiter's Swiss squad, winning 3-2 in overtime in another quarter-final.

Perfetti emerged from the back to share a sigh of relief on behalf of a dozen or so Canadian teammates.

"That was fun to watch," the native of Whitby, Ont., said. "Three on three, with those guys on the ice. Happy Canada won. It was a little nervous when they were losing there. But it's a good win for them."

Disaster averted.

"That was an awesome ending," head coach Scott Arniel said. "That's one thing about when you have such elite players playing a tournament like that... it's never over till it's over. You don't want to see them go through such a nail-biter, but it's probably great for them, having not played for a couple of days and getting right back in the heat of a game like that."

As for the anti-Canada sentiment, it's only natural, given the international melting pot that is not only the Jets room, but rooms across the NHL.

"We've got a mixture in here," Arniel said. "So, yeah, it's interesting."

Arniel predicted more drama as the hunt for gold continued.

Hours later, the Swedes scored a late goal to force Team USA to overtime in their quarter-final.

"That's the games that are coming," the coach had said.

Quinn Hughes won it for the Americans, silencing Nyquist and no doubt drawing fist-pumps from the handful of American Jets players watching from Winnipeg.

A Canada-U.S. gold-medal final remains possible.

Scheifele's words probably ring true for both: it's gold or bust.

[https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg\\_jets/jets-players-concern-over-fellow-teammates-olympic-ordeal/article\\_ff7ad0c5-df5d-4d43-8a8c-cca4f7bf5734.html](https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg_jets/jets-players-concern-over-fellow-teammates-olympic-ordeal/article_ff7ad0c5-df5d-4d43-8a8c-cca4f7bf5734.html)

### ***Jets teammates scratch heads over scratched Olympian Kyle Connor***

By Paul Friesen

When four members of the Winnipeg Jets were tapped by their countries for the Olympics, they couldn't have imagined they've have such vastly different experiences.

For teammates watching back in Winnipeg, it's hard to put themselves in one pair of shoes in particular: those of forward Kyle Connor.

Connor has been a healthy scratch for Team USA's last two games, including Wednesday's quarter-final, overtime win over Sweden, a mind-boggling development for his Jets linemates.

"I think KC is one of the best players in the league," Mark Scheifele said on Wednesday. "I love playing with him. He's unbelievable. He's so underrated. To see that, you just feel for him as a friend and just hope he's okay. I'm always there for him whenever he wants to talk."

Scheifele was devastated when he wasn't selected to play for Canada. He can't imagine being chosen, fulfilling a lifelong dream, only to be scratched when the games matter most.

"You wouldn't know what that would feel like unless you were there," Scheifele said. "You just hope he's okay and just soaking up the entire experience."

Two of their other teammates sure have.

Connor Hellebuyck has taken over as the No. 1 goalie for the U.S., leading them to a dramatic overtime win over Sweden in a Wednesday quarter-final.

Nino Niederreiter opened his Olympics by carrying the Swiss flag into the opening ceremonies, and closed it with a goal in another Wednesday's quarter-final, albeit in a heartbreaking overtime loss to Finland.

But at least Niederreiter got that taste of quarter-final action.

Gabe Vilardi has been the other winger on the Jets' top line much of this season, and can't help but scratch his head when he looks at what's happening to Connor, who ranks 13th in NHL scoring with 64 points.

"Put him on the first line of any team, he's going to create," Vilardi said. "So I don't know how he's not in the lineup. It's personal preferences, I guess."

Both Vilardi and Scheifele know players' roles change when they join a star-laden team like an American Olympic squad.

They also know it's out of their control.

"At the end of the day he's still an Olympian," Vilardi said. "He's still proven that. He's one of the best players in the world. The fact that he can't crack the lineup is obviously for other reasons that they're looking for a certain role, maybe."

Forward Cole Perfetti says knowing Connor, he won't be making a fuss about the coaches' decisions.

"Obviously he wants to be in the lineup and be playing and be an impact guy like he is for us," Perfetti said. "But at the end of the day he's got to be a good teammate and be there for the guys and be there for winning a gold medal. That's the biggest thing for him."

Jets coach Scott Arniel says there's always players who make sacrifices to wear their country's sweater in events like this.

He's not counting out Connor, just yet.

"He's a guy you want in those games, in that third period when it's a tight game... a difference maker that can put the puck in the back of the net," Arniel said. "Whatever their decision is there, why they're doing it, I'm not sure. I don't agree with it, but... I just hope that after today's game, maybe he gets a chance in the semifinals."

Teammates have just as much empathy for defenceman Josh Morrissey, who played just one game for Canada before getting hurt.

"I've been talking to him a lot," Scheifele said. "You never want to see anyone get hurt, especially your best friend. It's unimaginable. That's the biggest thing. You really wouldn't know what it would be like unless you're in those shoes. Can't even imagine it."

Morrissey missed Canada's overtime win over Czechia in a Wednesday quarter-final.

"Injuries are part of the game," Vilardi added. "It's unfortunate the timing of the injury, at the Olympics. But I'm sure he's doing whatever he can to get back out there. He's already proven that he's one of the best defencemen in the world. There's nothing left to prove."

Morrissey's injury comes after he missed the 4 Nations tournament final with an illness a year ago.

"You do feel really bad for him," Perfetti said. "You could tell how much it meant to him leading up to it and how excited he was for the Olympics. And to then get hurt in the first game, you feel for him. But just hoping that he has a couple more days to recover here and then be ready to go for the semifinals. Was really looking forward to watching him play."

Scheifele echoed that sentiment.

"You wish Josh and KC were playing," he said. "Because you're watching as a fan more than anything. And a buddy."