

## **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/03/04/hockey-nights-in-skelleftea>

### ***Hockey nights in Skelleftea Salomonsson's parents cheering on Jets defenceman from Sweden***

By: Mike McIntyre

Elias Salomonsson's father used to rise at the crack of dawn to drive his son to hockey practices back home in Sweden.

Now? He's pulling all-nighters, watching that same son live out his NHL dream.

"He's stayed up to watch all the games we've played. He's pretty tired in the morning," Salomonsson said Wednesday with a laugh. "But he can take it."

Memo to folks in Skelleftea: If you happen to come across a bleary-eyed carpenter, maybe give him an extra shot of espresso before he starts ripping apart your floorboards.

Yes, the seven-hour time difference can pose a challenge. But Salomonsson is doing his best to give Dad — and Mom — plenty to cheer about. Both were tuned in last Friday night — or, in their case, the wee hours of Saturday morning — when the 21-year-old defenceman scored his first NHL goal against the Anaheim Ducks.

"That was pretty special," he said, noting the milestone puck which is currently in the hands of Jets trainers will soon be shipped back home to go in his childhood bedroom.

The Salomonssons were glued to the TV once again late Tuesday/early Wednesday as Salomonsson logged 21:43 of ice time — the most in his 17 NHL games to date.

"He's stayed up to watch all the games we've played. He's pretty tired in the morning."

"That was fun," he said of the increased workload in a 3-2 overtime victory over the Chicago Blackhawks, which included moving to a pairing with Logan Stanley in the final frame as the Jets mounted a comeback.

"I think we created some good chances in the O-zone there, I think we moved the puck, we moved our feet on the blue line. We created some movement. It felt good."

They'll no doubt be tuned in again Thursday night/early Friday when Salomonsson and his teammates continue an eight-game homestand by hosting the Tampa Bay Lightning. No offence to some of Winnipeg's recent opponents, but that's a significant step up in weight class.

"That's a game you look forward to, to play against some of the best in the world," said Salomonsson.

"I think we have to play tight defensively, don't give them much time or space out there. I think that's when they are pretty dangerous, when they get that extra time to make plays. So just try to shut them down."

The fact Salomonsson is now being relied upon to help contain the likes of Nikita Kucherov and Brayden Point shows how far he's come in a short time. There were growing pains following his first promotion from the Manitoba Moose in November, but he's looked like a different player since his second recall in mid-January.

"He's made the adjustments," said assistant coach Davis Payne.

"A lot of times for a young player coming in, you sort of deal with your energy of being in the league and that's a real positive. And then all of a sudden the sort of weight of the everyday — tough opponent, new opponent, travel schedule, the reset — how quickly that has to happen versus the way it does in the American League is a little bit of an adjustment."

Only Stanley and Dylan Samberg logged more ice time than Salomonsson against Chicago. Sure, the Jets are currently without two key blue-liners in Josh Morrissey and Neal Pionk, but that's still quite the vote of confidence.

"We felt (Tuesday) that he built a game from start to finish and in the third period he was a really good player, in all those areas you're talking about: defending, taking ice, good gaps and making good decisions, hard decisions, with the puck," said Payne.

"We always knew he was a great player. Down with the Moose we got to see it every day in practice and games."

Jets forward Walker Duehr, who has spent plenty of time with Salomonsson on the farm this season, said he's not surprised by the rapid rise.

"We always knew he was a great player. Down with the Moose we got to see it every day in practice and games," said Duehr.

"He's kind of just translated pretty seamlessly up here. I think his game is pretty suited well for the NHL level. He skates well, he's got a good shot and he moves the puck fast. It's been really cool to see him take a leap each game."

There's a good chance Salomonsson will be sent down to the Moose on Friday — at least for 24 hours. The Jets may want to make him eligible for the AHL playoffs, which would require a transaction. Rule changes this year prevent a simple paper move, so Salomonsson would have to actually suit up for the Moose to make it official.

An instant recall would likely follow — along with plenty of runway over the remainder of the regular season to show what he can offer.

"I've been feeling pretty good. Especially to score my first NHL goal there, that was a huge milestone for me. I'm just trying to take it day-by-day and keep getting better," said Salomonsson.

#### *TESTY TAMPA*

The Lightning are one of the NHL's top teams this season, but they'll arrive in Winnipeg in a foul mood after dropping three straight in regulation by a combined 16-7 margin — including a 5-1 loss Tuesday night in Minnesota.

“We’ve played good teams this year, and we’ve hung right with them. We know our game is effective against good teams and that’s all facets of it,” said Payne.

“Now, there’s some guys that are not in the lineup right now that we’d sure like to have in there against a team like that. But at the same time your team game can get stronger. We can hang with anybody, and we know that. And that’s exciting to have that sort of challenge coming in.”

The Jets held an optional skate Wednesday, with Morrissey once again wearing a non-contact jersey. He’s unlikely to be ready for Tampa Bay, but could be an option by the weekend. Pionk, fellow defenceman Colin Miller and injured forwards Nino Niederreiter and Vlad Namestnikov are nowhere near a return.

### **TRADE TALKS**

Adding another layer of uncertainty to Winnipeg’s lineup is Friday’s looming trade deadline.

Including Duehr and depth defenceman Ville Heinola, the Jets have 10 pending unrestricted free agents on the roster. With the club sitting well outside the playoff picture, could some be on the move? Unlike a year ago, Winnipeg won’t be buyers.

“We put ourselves in a position where reality is what it is. And last year was a different reality, obviously. And so we’ve just got to be prepared to play our best (Thursday) against Tampa and then deal with the next day,” said Payne.

“In all these situations you have to narrow your focus. And your players have to do that. There’s a lot of stuff that goes in that at this time of year is disruptive. And it’s far more disruptive to families and to kids and to wives and girlfriends than it is coaches, than it is fans, than it is media.”

Managing that emotional toll is a game in itself, Payne added.

“There’s a lot of impact behind the scenes that we have to be conscious of, and at the same time narrow our focus to playing a good game for the Winnipeg Jets,” he said.

“You’ve got to understand these guys in here or these guys in any room, they grow together, and they grow up together. They bleed and sweat and battle together, and there’s a bond there that’s beyond friendship. It’s very, very deep. They care for each other. And to see someone that you’re that close to moving out the door, it’s not easy.”

### **The Athletic**

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/7086972/2026/03/05/winnipeg-jets-trade-deadline-players-to-add/>

### ***Players with term on their contracts who could help Winnipeg Jets beyond this season***

By Murat Ates

The Winnipeg Jets are projected to be sellers on deadline day, with pending free agents such as Luke Schenn and Logan Stanley topping the list of likely moves.

But the Jets are also projected to be able to add about \$13 million to their existing cap hit, according to PuckPedia.

What if they used that cap space to add players, too? The Jets are trying to compete next season and throughout as much of Connor Hellebuyck's and Mark Scheifele's matching contracts as possible. Kyle Connor is about to get more expensive, with his \$12 million contract kicking in next season, but Winnipeg is still paying Josh Morrissey a team-friendly \$6.25 million AAV through the end of 2027-28.

And, as we've covered, there are reasons to think the Jets aren't quite as bad as their spot in the standings this season.

Today, we look at players who might be able to help Winnipeg win next season and beyond. They won't all come with team-friendly contracts, nor will everyone have the star caliber of Hellebuyck, Morrissey, Scheifele or Connor, but that's not the point. We'll also cover a group of players whose contracts are so inefficient that teams might be willing to package them with draft picks just to get inefficient money off their hands.

How can Winnipeg use its cap space to add players at the deadline?

*Tier 1: A run-through of unlikely top-end talent*

For Winnipeg to take a big swing on a high-end player — likely a forward for its second line — several factors have to align.

A quality player must be available. He must not have trade protection (or be willing to waive it for Winnipeg). And Winnipeg must be able to provide the asset quality that satisfies the selling team. That's a tough series of needles to thread for a Jets franchise without a lot of draft capital or high-end prospects; Winnipeg is missing its second- and fourth-round picks in the next two drafts, and its prospects pool was ranked No. 25 in our most recent prospects pool ratings.

Let's take a look through the options, starting with the names atop our latest trade board.

Vincent Trocheck could be an ideal No. 2 centre. He has a 12-team no-trade clause and has indicated his desire to play in the Eastern Conference. Nazem Kadri has played a big role on a Stanley Cup-winning team (and has signed in Canada before) but carries a 13-team no-trade clause. Robert Thomas is a 26-year-old star who has averaged over a point per game for the last five seasons, but he carries a full no-trade clause.

You can take the trade board through to its conclusion and find a long list of desirable players who have trade protection or who are being treated by their teams as if they have trade protection: Blake Coleman, Ryan O'Reilly, Steven Stamkos, Elias Pettersson, Jesperi Kotkaniemi and beyond.

Then you hear insiders such as The Athletic's and TSN's Chris Johnston talk about the St. Louis Blues' asking for three "first-round-caliber" assets for Thomas and wonder where Winnipeg would even find those. There are teams with more draft capital and top prospects to part with than Winnipeg; the Jets would be gutted if they moved Cole Perfetti, their 2026 first-round pick, and Sascha Boumediene to consummate a trade like that — even if Thomas approved a trade — and could still be outbid.

Thus, Kevin Cheveldayoff's pursuit of a long-term solution on his second line looks beyond the realm of reasonable, unless he can surprise us all by acquiring a lesser name with greater upside for a price that doesn't hurt future Jets teams as much as I expect.

*Tier 2: Mid-tier players + poor contracts = great opportunity?*

Let's return to Kotkaniemi for a moment. The 25-year-old forward has a 10-team no-trade clause, but he's slid down the Carolina Hurricanes' depth chart to the point where he's regularly playing less than 10 minutes per game. It's a disappointing turn for a player once thought to be a solid 200-foot centreman with the ability to produce secondary offence.

Kotkaniemi is three years removed from a career-best 18 goals and 43 points for the Hurricanes in 2022-23. This makes his \$4.82 million cap hit unwieldy for Carolina, particularly if it's looking to make a big splash at this year's deadline. He's still a competent defensive player — just not such an elite shutdown player so as to make up for scoring just 9 points in 36 games.

All of the questions about Kotkaniemi's ability relative to his contract (and the four years remaining on it) should make him easier to acquire. No "three first-round-caliber" assets here — just enough value to shake him free from a team that's already barely using him.

The advantages of this line of thinking are that Kotkaniemi — or players like him — should be attainable via the type of assets the Jets can actually afford to spend. The difficulty is clear, too: If it were somehow known that he would definitely return to form over the next four years, Kotkaniemi wouldn't be available.

Winnipeg should be looking at players such as this in case it finds value. That doesn't mean there's automatically value to be had.

*Tier 3: What about using bad contracts to add draft picks?*

An early Wednesday draft of this piece discussed Andrew Mangiapane, a player I advocated for Winnipeg to sign last summer. Back then, I believed the level Mangiapane hit in his final three seasons for the Calgary Flames was more indicative of his ability than his performance with the Washington Capitals. It seems I was wrong: Mangiapane was such a poor fit in Edmonton that the Edmonton Oilers spent much of the season trying to move him, including putting him on waivers.

When no one claimed him, it became clear Edmonton would need to package a draft pick along with Mangiapane to entice a team to trade for him. The Oilers accomplished that (in creative fashion) by acquiring pending UFA Jason Dickinson and Colton Dach from the Chicago Blackhawks for Mangiapane and a first-round draft pick in 2027.

That's exactly the kind of trade I'd advocate for a team like Winnipeg's to try to replicate. Mangiapane wasn't the prize — just an attempt at a reclamation project — but Chicago was able to acquire an extra first-round pick for a prospect and a pending UFA.

Forwards such as Warren Foegele (\$3.5 million AAV, Los Angeles Kings) and Ryan Strome (\$5.0 million AAV, Anaheim Ducks) have maintained more of their value than Mangiapane did in Edmonton, but they each have an extra year on their contract, which might be more palatable to Winnipeg than to their current teams. Foegele, 29, has seen his offence come crashing down to 9 points in 47 games after 46-point and 41-point seasons. Strome, 32, has only 8 points in 32 games this season after six straight 40-plus-point seasons.

Foegele has five teams in his no-trade clause, and Strome does not have trade protection. Any trade-making sweeteners wouldn't come close to the first-round pick Chicago got for taking Mangiapane, but depth picks have value. Target a player who helps, despite an overinflated contract, and Winnipeg would win on two fronts.

Regardless of which tier of player Winnipeg targets, it's difficult to find an obvious home run swing that fixes everything all at once. MacKenzie Weegar might be that player, but the Jets don't have three second-round picks to part with in a package as the Utah Mammoth did.

Utah is an exceptional case — it's acquired a lot of draft capital by acquiring bad contracts over several seasons — but it proves an important point. Second-round picks such as the ones Winnipeg parted with for Schenn and Brandon Tanev a year ago have value. That value can add up to help or hurt a team, depending on its asset management.

The Jets can blame the sheer volume of no-trade clauses for part of their difficulty in making moves. A lack of draft capital is also part of their problem, though — and Winnipeg is responsible for that. It highlights how important it is for the Jets to recoup assets in their role as sellers this year. Even if their offseason retool is successful and they're playoff contenders all over again next season, they're going to need more draft capital than they have now to go shopping for more immediate help.

## **Global Winnipeg**

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11715908/analysis-winnipeg-jets-avoid-stumbling-start-to-critical-homestand/>

### ***ANALYSIS: Winnipeg Jets avoid a stumbling start to critical homestand***

By Paul Edmonds CJOB

In looking through a broad lens at their season so far, Tuesday's win over Chicago may not carry much weight for the Winnipeg Jets.

Sure, it was exciting — late third-period comebacks and overtime victories by the home team to finish the night always are — but if the Jets eventually fall short of their quest for a post-season berth, the game will likely just float into the ether.

But had Winnipeg not rallied to win on Tuesday evening to begin a potentially pivotal eight-game homestand, it would have easily been considered another deep dagger into their chances of playing beyond game 82, if not the finishing blow.

And for a group that tangibly still believes in their own playoff relevance, last night's win holds a lot of value in fostering that faith.

Or as Mark Scheifele, who ended the contest with his team-leading fifth game-winning goal of the season, mentioned post-game, they're going to keep pushing each other and "control the controllable."

In other words, the Jets are all on board to stay in the fight and to see exactly how far they can drag this thing along before there's some kind of letter beside their name in the standings — consonant good or vowel bad!

Beating the improving Blackhawks last night for a second time at home this season was an important step to starting the second-longest homestand in franchise history, but the Jets' next challenge will carry a higher degree of difficulty.

After all, the Tampa Bay Lightning are one of the best teams in the NHL and they're on the schedule next for the Jets on Thursday night.

Of course, recording another win is vital to Winnipeg's pursuit of game 83 hockey next month, even though it might not change the lens on the Jets' overall season at this point.

But what it could do is carry a little more weight toward Winnipeg's desired sprint to the finish line, and using this eight-game homestand to help them get there.

### **Winnipeg Sun**

[https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg\\_jets/sleepless-in-sweden-jets-salomonsson-gives-mom-dad-a-treat/article\\_82c74b98-4564-44ff-8950-22fe3ad3faa2.html](https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg_jets/sleepless-in-sweden-jets-salomonsson-gives-mom-dad-a-treat/article_82c74b98-4564-44ff-8950-22fe3ad3faa2.html)

#### ***Sleepless in Sweden: Jets' Salomonsson gives mom, dad, a treat***

By Paul Friesen

Winnipeg Jets defenceman Elias Salomonsson has now played 17 NHL games, all this season, meaning his dad back home in Sweden has been suffering from a lack of sleep for a while.

"My Dad has stayed up all games we've played," Salomonsson said on the eve of Game 18. "He's pretty tired at work in the morning. But he can take it."

Occasionally, Salomonsson's mom stays up, too. One of those times was last Friday, when their son scored his first NHL goal against the Ducks in Anaheim.

"That's a huge milestone for me," the 21-year-old said. "That was pretty special."

Thrust into action with injuries to Josh Morrissey and Neal Pionk, Salomonsson hasn't exactly been sheltered. He's exceeded 18 minutes of ice time eight times, peaking at 21:43 in Tuesday's overtime win over Chicago.

His goal is his only NHL point to date, he hopes he's made a point of another kind.

"It definitely felt like more ice time than I'm used to having," he said. "It was fun. To put up some offensive zone shifts – we created some good chances in the third period."

The Jets' second-round draft pick in 2022, Salomonsson felt like he had some pretty instant chemistry with defence partner Logan Stanley on Tuesday.

His coaches saw it, too.

"He built a game from start to finish," is how assistant Davis Payne put it. "And in the third period he was a really good player... defending, taking ice, good gaps and making good decisions, hard decisions, with the puck."

"We always knew he was a great player," added forward Walker Duehr, Salomonsson's teammate with the Manitoba Moose in the AHL much of the season. "Down with the Moose we got to see it every day in practice and games. He's just translated pretty seamlessly up here. His game is pretty suited well for the NHL level. He skates well, he's got a good shot and he moves the puck fast.

"It's been really cool to see him take a leap each game."

Depending on the health of teammates like Morrissey and the futures of players like Stanley, who's without a contract for next year and could be traded by Friday's deadline, Salomonsson could remain a workhorse on the blue line for the foreseeable future.

"He's made the adjustments," Payne said. "A lot of times for a young player coming in, you deal with your energy of being in the league and that's a real positive. And then all of a sudden the weight of the every-day, tough opponent, new opponent, travel schedule, the reset... is a little bit of an adjustment."

Thursday marks another: a game against the talent-laden Tampa Bay Lightning.

No fear, says the kid.

"That's a game you look forward to, to play against some of the best in the world."

It probably means another sleepless night for his father.

As for the puck from his first goal, Salomonsson figures it'll end up on display in his childhood room back in Skelleftea, Sweden.

Dad will likely have a hand in that, too, based on his job: he's a carpenter.

[https://www.winnipeg.sun.com/sports/winnipeg\\_jets/winnipeg-jets-face-stern-test-against-tampa-bay-lightning/article\\_15e89309-9f95-4fa5-96f6-47e6e7ca0f1d.html](https://www.winnipeg.sun.com/sports/winnipeg_jets/winnipeg-jets-face-stern-test-against-tampa-bay-lightning/article_15e89309-9f95-4fa5-96f6-47e6e7ca0f1d.html)

***'We can hang with anybody': last game before deadline will test Jets' will***

By Paul Friesen

They needed overtime to squeak past Vancouver, the worst team in the NHL. And after two overtime losses that followed, they came home and needed it again to get past lowly Chicago on Tuesday.

Thursday, Game 2 of an eight-game home stand, presents an entirely different animal for the desperate Winnipeg Jets: the Tampa Bay Lightning, a team that's won 14 more games, has 22 more points in the standings and has scored 52 more goals than its opposition, compared to the Jets minus-15 ratio.

"We've played good teams this year, and we've hung right with them," assistant coach Davis Payne said on Wednesday. "We know our game is effective against good teams, and that's all facets of it. Now, there's some guys that are not in the lineup right now that we'd sure like to have in there against a team like that. But at the same time your team game can get stronger.

"We can hang with anybody."

The thing is, without Josh Morrissey and Neal Pionk on the blue line they had trouble hanging with the Blackhawks for two periods, only salvaging two points with a last-minute goal to force overtime and a rare win in OT.

Cole Perfetti, the man who scored the tying goal, said the Jets could "wash out" the first two periods and cling to the third and whatever momentum they can carry over for 48 hours.

They won't get away with that against the Lightning.

Overtime hero Mark Scheifele called Tuesday's game sloppy, another trait that'll be a death wish on Thursday.

This eight-game run, the longest of the year at home, simply can't have any slop.

The Jets probably have to win them all to stay in the hunt for even a sniff of a playoff spot, and even that might only gain them a few points on the wildcard teams.

"We are just going to push each other until the end of the year and just see what happens," Scheifele said. "Just control the controllable."

Perhaps Winnipeg can take advantage of a Lightning squad that's lost three straight and is clinging to a two-point lead over Buffalo in their division.

Or will that make the Lightning a surly bunch on Thursday?

"Well, perhaps," Payne said. "But I'm not looking to go inside the mindset of every locker-room. We've got lots of our own business to take care of."

That they do. How to play a full 60 minutes would be a good place to start.

They at least have 20-plus minutes from Tuesday to build on.

"It was vital," Payne said of the win. "We hadn't put our two best periods together. Got down early in the third. Knowing what we're up against and the hill we've got to climb, that was a real, real important hockey game for us... so that we can sustain momentum, which is going to be a part of this home stand."

One thing they haven't had to deal with, at least not something that's been apparent on the scoreboard, is quit.

"No," Payne said. "Why would we?"

### *The human side of trades*

A year ago at this time, players and coaches were eagerly anticipating what the first-place Jets might add at the trade deadline, with an eye on making a run at the Stanley Cup.

This week, it's about the stark reality of who might get shipped out.

Payne, speaking in place of head coach Scott Arniel on Wednesday, said as disruptive as it can be, there's no need to feel sorry for any coaches.

"It's far more disruptive to families and to kids and to wives and girlfriends than it is coaches, than it is fans, than it is media," the former head man said. "I know there's news stories out there because of it. But there's a lot of impact behind the scenes that we have to be conscious of, and at the same time narrow our focus to playing a good game for the Winnipeg Jets."

Thursday marks the last game before Friday's deadline, likely meaning one final dressing-room gathering for this specific group of players.

Payne has seen the toll that upheaval can have.

"I'm not going to get specific, but you've got to understand these guys in here or these guys in any room, they grow together, and they grow up together," he said. "They bleed and sweat and battle together, and there's a bond there that's beyond friendship. It's very, very deep. And to see someone that you're that close to moving out the door, it's not easy."

#### *Not ready yet*

Morrissey remains doubtful for Thursday's game and more hopeful for Saturday's against the Canucks, as he took part in Wednesday's optional skate still wearing a non-contact sweater.

Morrissey still hasn't played since the first game of the Olympics.

His and Pionk's absence leave a hole no team could completely fill.

"It's big," Payne said. "I don't know how big. I don't know how to put a scale on that. They're good players for us and they log a lot of minutes... at the same time we've got good young guys who haven't been in the lineup, haven't been with us the whole year stepping in. That's what has to get done."