

***THREE THINGS: Hellebuyck makes 32 saves, Jets win 4th straight  
Toews gets 900th career point, Scheifele records 4-point night in 6-2 win***

By Jamie Thomas

Connor Hellebuyck made 29 saves leading the Winnipeg Jets to a 6-2 win over the Minnesota Wild at Grand Casino Arena. The Jets won their fourth straight game and ended their nine-game winless streak on the road. Mark Scheifele had a four-point night (1G 3A), Gabriel Vilardi, Jonathan Toews, Tanner Pearson, Josh Morrissey and Logan Stanley scored for Winnipeg. Morrissey recorded his 90th career multi-point game and surpassed Dustin Byfuglien for the most multi-point efforts by a defenceman in franchise history, Winnipeg will host the Toronto Maple Leafs on Saturday at Canada Life Centre.

***HELLE SHOW FIRST, THEN TOEWS 900TH POINT***

It is not uncommon for Connor Hellebuyck to give his teammates time to get their legs under them and that was the case in the first period on Thursday night. Minnesota fired the first 10 shots on net and Hellebuyck turned them all aside. Finally, Matt Boldy was whistled for high-sticking Dylan DeMelo and just over 30 seconds after that Marcus Foligno tripped Gabriel Vilardi to give the Jets a 5-on-3 advantage. On that power play, Jonathan Toews opened the scoring slamming in a loose puck behind Jesper Wallstedt for a 1-0 lead and the 900th point of his career.

Winnipeg would close out the first period with two goals eight seconds apart, first Tanner Pearson made sure to follow up his own rebound to score his seventh of the season.

Moments later, Toews won an offensive zone faceoff to Mark Scheifele, and he spotted Josh Morrissey who one-timed a slap shot past Wallstedt with under three seconds left in the period and Winnipeg led 3-0 after 20 minutes.

"Obviously, you get a five on three, you got to take advantage, especially the way that the start of the game went," said Scheifele.

"So, obviously I was a big goal on a five on three, and then to get two right at the end of the period is, was a kind of a back breaker."

***BIG STAN AND SCHEIFELE***

In the second period, the Wild pulled to within two goals when Danila Yurov scored at 4:53 to make it 3-1. But the Jets restored their three-goal lead after their power play expired when Logan Stanley held the puck in at the blue line, walked in and blasted a slap shot over Wallstedt's shoulder for his eighth of the season. After the game, Scheifele said that he was like a proud dad when it comes to Stanley's success this season and the Jets defenceman had this to say.

"Yeah. He's helped me a lot, actually. He's done a lot of work with me since I was 18, 19 and got drafted," said Stanley.

"And he's always been in my corner, he's a great friend, and I love him."

Scheifele added to his point totals to help the Jets extend the lead, as he got a secondary assist on Gabriel Vilardi's power play goal at 12:51. The Jets number one centre watched Alex Lafallo enter the Wild zone, head behind the net and Lafallo set up Scheifele who ripped a shot off the post and in. It was Scheifele's 13th career four-point game and tied Blake Wheeler for the second most in franchise history.

#### **SUCCESS ON THE ROAD VS. WILD**

Per NHL Stats, The Jets won their sixth straight road games against the Wild dating to the 2022-23 season, which is their longest active streak against a single opponent. The only team they have recorded a longer run against in their franchise history are the Canucks (8-0-0 from 2016-17 to 2020-21).

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/blog-pionk-week-to-week-salomonsson-recalled>

#### **BLOG: Pionk week-to-week, Salomonsson recalled**

**Arniel: "We've been going through it all year, you get into your Top-4 that's a big impact."**

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – The Winnipeg Jets depth on defence will be tested in the coming weeks as head coach Scott Arniel updated the media Wednesday afternoon about three of his defencemen.

"We've got some bad news going here," said Arniel following practice.

"(Haydn) Fleury will go week-to-week, (Colin) Miller will go week-to-week, and (Neal) Pionk will go week-to-week. So, three defencemen down."

The big surprise was Pionk, as the veteran blueliner had played the last two games, 22:56 against New Jersey and 20:21 against the Islanders last night.

"It's been kind of going on," said Arniel.

"And then last night he fell and kind of reaggravated it a little bit more."

Pionk had missed the Jets game against the Kings and Miller filled in for him alongside Dylan Samberg until he got hurt. Clearly the big blow is losing Pionk, who is a top four defenceman that kills penalties and is the Jets power play QB on the second unit.

Isaak Phillips had already been recalled by the Jets, the 24-year-old has NHL experience and will likely get a chance in the coming days to make his Jets debut. Elias Salomonsson has been recalled as well and will fly into St. Paul tonight.

"At the end of the day, even losing other guys, the depth of what we had, with our schedule and how heavy it's been, and not having Fleur and Millsy around, it's a grind," said Arniel.

"When we get these three in fours and four in sixes, it's nice to put new bodies in, fresh legs in there, and we can't really do that. So, look to the kids coming in, getting an opportunity. Hopefully they can step up and help us."

One positive from the Jets skate today was that Morgan Barron was out of a non-contact jersey and into navy blue.

"He's not cleared. That was first day without the (non-contact) jersey," said Arniel.

"He could be a player tomorrow. I've got to see how he makes out after today. Wakes up tomorrow, see if he's good to go."

A big change from the last time the Jets and Wild met on December 27 is that Winnipeg has started putting the puck in the net with 28 goals in seven games since the calendar changed to 2026. The Jets missed out on two points as the Wild scored late in the third to tie the contest and went on to win in overtime.

"I mean, they're obviously an elite team," said Nino Niederreiter.

"They added some great pieces and but like I said, we lost the game. We definitely did some good things. But overall, we tried to build on the last three games and go from there."

### **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-minnesota-wild-game-recap-january-15-2026>

### ***Scheifele has 4 points, Jets cruise past Wild for 4th straight win Toews surpasses 900 NHL points for Winnipeg; Minnesota has lost 5 of 6***

By Jessi Pierce

ST. PAUL, Minn. -- Mark Scheifele had a goal and three assists for the Winnipeg Jets, who won their fourth straight game with a 6-2 victory against the Minnesota Wild at Grand Casino Arena on Thursday.

"I think we've just been playing better hockey," Scheifele said. "Everyone's firing on all cylinders. Guys are making plays, holding on to pucks, just kind of doing what's -- making the play in front of them. So, it's been a great team effort."

Josh Morrissey, Gabriel Vilardi and Jonathan Toews each had a goal and an assist for the Jets (19-22-5), whose winning streak has come after an 11-game losing streak (0-7-4). Connor Hellebuyck made 32 saves.

"We're trying to catch some teams right now, and [the Wild] have got their own little (battle)," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "They're in that top three (in the Central Division), so, they've got their battle up top there. For us, we need to keep piling them together."

Danila Yurov and Marcus Johansson scored for the Wild (26-13-9), who have lost three straight (0-2-1) and five of their past six (1-3-2). Jesper Wallstedt allowed six goals on 20 shots before being replaced at the start of the third period by Filip Gustavsson, who made nine saves.

"It's disappointing. No one feels it more than the players," Minnesota coach John Hynes said. "But tonight, it was certain things. It wasn't a game where you got dominated or you got outplayed, but we talk a lot about being a disciplined team, a focused team, attention to details

is critical, and if you're just taking tonight's game, those little things matter, and that's why we enforce them and that's why usually we're a good team. And tonight it wasn't that."

Toews gave Winnipeg a 1-0 lead at 14:08 of the first period during a 5-on-3 power play. He knocked the puck in at the right post after Vilardi couldn't control the rebound of Scheifele's initial one-timer.

The goal was Toews' 900th NHL point.

"He's really playing his game. Nine hundred points, that's obviously amazing," Arniel said. "He's feeling it, which is awesome. Let's just hope he feels it right through to the end of the season. It took him a while to find his legs, to find his place and his game. Now you see it and he's getting the reward from it."

Tanner Pearson extended the lead to 2-0 with 11 seconds remaining in the first. Dylan DeMelo stopped Quinn Hughes' clearing attempt at the right point and immediately sent a shot toward the net that was stopped by Wallstedt. Pearson was then denied by the sprawling right pad of the Wild goaltender before he was able to lift in his second chance in front.

Morrissey scored just eight seconds later to make it 3-0. Toews won a face-off in the left circle to Scheifele, who found Morrissey for a one-timer with three seconds left in the period.

"We're working for our bounces and creating that with hard work, and it's definitely a good feeling coming in here being up and having a good, maybe not a good first period, but a good end of the period," Jets defenseman Logan Stanley said.

Yurov cut the deficit to 3-1 at 4:53 of the second period with a one-timer from the right hash marks.

"[Yurov's] a very smart player in both ends of the ice. All three zones he's a smart player," Wild defenseman Jake Middleton said. "He found a lane there and got open."

Stanley pushed it to 4-1 at 9:33, roofing a slap shot under the crossbar from the left circle after he kept the puck in at the blue line.

Vilardi scored a power-play goal to make it 5-1 at 12:51. He shot into an open net at the right post after Morrissey's initial attempt caromed to him off the end boards.

Scheifele made it 6-1 at 17:12. Alex Iafallo took a pass from Kyle Connor as he stepped out of the penalty box and skated all the way around the net before feeding Scheifele for a one-timer that went in off the far post from the right circle.

"What I really liked tonight was that there were six goals from six different people," Arniel said. "We've been struggling to score goals, but in the last probably three weeks here it's starting to go the right way for us."

Johansson made it 6-2 at 17:18 of the third period, scoring from in front after Matt Boldy sent him a backhand pass from behind the net.

"It's tough," Wild forward Marcus Foligno said. "We get in a hole, and it's tough to come back. ... It just seemed like one of those games. Everything was kind of going in and just things kept falling on top of you, and when you were hoping to kind of get a breath you couldn't."

**NOTES:** Toews extended his goal streak to four games. He has 379 goals and 522 assists in 1,113 NHL games. ... Scheifele has 10 points (three goals, seven assists) in his past five games. ... Wild defenseman David Spacek played 11:59 in his NHL debut.

### **Associated Press**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/scheifele-has-four-points-as-jets-beat-wild-for-fourth-straight-win/>

### ***Scheifele has four points as Jets beat Wild for fourth straight win***

By Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Mark Scheifele had a goal and three assists, Jonathan Toews scored for the fourth consecutive game and the Winnipeg Jets beat the Minnesota Wild 6-2 on Thursday night.

Toews also had an assist, Gabriel Vilardi and Josh Morrissey each had a goal and an assist, and Tanner Pearson and Logan Stanley scored as Winnipeg tied its season high for goals.

Connor Hellebuyck made 32 saves as the Jets won their fourth straight following an 11-game losing streak (0-7-4). Winnipeg is 9-1-1 in its past 11 games against the Wild, including six straight wins in Minnesota.

Danila Yurov and Marcus Johansson scored for the Wild, who are 1-3-2 in their last six games. Jesper Wallstedt made 14 saves in two periods; Filip Gustavsson had eight in the third.

Minnesota had the game's first 10 shots on goal, but Winnipeg scored first when, with a two-man advantage, Toews poked in a rebound of Vilardi's shot.

It was the 900th career point for Toews, who last had goals in four straight games in March 2014. He had three goals in his first 42 games this season.

Pearson put home his own rebound with 11 seconds left in the opening period. A one-timer from Morrissey made it 3-0 eight seconds later.

It was the fastest two goals scored since the franchise relocated to Winnipeg. Ron Hainsey and Chris Thorburn scored seven seconds apart for the Atlanta Thrashers on Dec. 2, 2008.

Yurov got the Wild within 3-1 early in the second period, but Stanley scored on a slap shot, Vilardi on a rebound and Scheifele went bar down later in the frame for his 13th career four-point game.

Morrissey's assist on Vilardi's goal gave him 90 career multipoint games, passing Dustin Byfuglien for the most by a defenseman in Jets history.

*Up next*

Jets: Host the Toronto Maple Leafs on Saturday.

Wild: Begin a three-game trip Saturday at Buffalo.

## **TSN.ca**

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/article/firing-on-all-cylinders-suddenly-resurgent-jets-earn-fourth-straight-win/>

### ***'Firing on all cylinders': Suddenly resurgent Jets earn fourth straight win***

By TSN.ca Staff

It's been a quick turnaround for the Winnipeg Jets, who were in the basement of the league a week ago after losing their 11th consecutive game but have now rattled off four straight wins after a 6-2 victory over the Minnesota Wild on Thursday.

So what has led to this resurgent streak?

Star forward Mark Scheifele kept things simple when speaking to reporters after the victory in which he recorded a goal and three assists.

"I think we've just been playing better hockey," Scheifele said. "Everyone's firing on all cylinders. Guys are making plays, holding on to pucks, just kind of ... making the play in front of them. So, it's been a great team effort."

Not all losing streaks are the same. Four of the 11 losses in a row the Jets suffered from Dec. 15 - Jan. 8 came in overtime, and nine of those losses were by one goal.

Over their past four games, the Jets have rattled off two commanding four-goal victories and have outscored their opponents 20-10. Their goal differential over their past 15, despite the 4-7-4 record, is only minus-3.

Improved goal scoring has played a significant role in the recent surge. "What I really liked [on Thursday] was that there were six goals from six different people," head coach Scott Arniel said to reporters after the game. "We've been struggling to score goals, but in the last probably three weeks here it's starting to go the right way for us."

And while there is hope that this version of the Jets that have produced four wins in a row can make more consistent appearances, the team also has to deal with the fact that at 19-22-5 and at the bottom of the Central Division standings, playoff contention is still a ways away.

"I wouldn't say that now," Arniel said when asked if he believed that this victory over the third-place Wild could be considered a 'statement win'.

"If we were battling for first or second place it might be something, but we're trying to catch teams right now. For us, we're trying to pile them together, keep piling points up, try and catch these teams sitting above," Arniel said. "Now we're watching Calgary, Chicago and Utah, those teams sitting above us are the ones we're after."

Winnipeg will try to match their season-high winning streak and make it five in a row when they host the Toronto Maple Leafs on Saturday night in an all-Canadian showdown.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/>

### ***Jets hold off Wild, and 'show resilience' in fourth straight victory (VIDEO)***

After going winless in 11 games, the Jets have now won four in a row. TSN's Dan Robertson and Kevin Sawyer have more on how Winnipeg was able to rebound from a slow start.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/article/scheifele-savours-assist-milestone/>

### ***Scheifele savours assist milestone***

By Danielle Bain

When asked on the Jets On TSN broadcast Tuesday whether he likes scoring or setting up his teammates more, Mark Scheifele didn't hesitate to pick assists.

"I like setting them up," said Scheifele during the second intermission in an interview with Jets broadcaster Kevin Sawyer. "Obviously, scoring is fun, but I love a good assist."

He's had a lot of helpers to reflect on throughout his 924-game career – 500 to be exact – after recording two assists in the Jets' 5-4 win over the New York Islanders on Tuesday night.

Scheifele hit the milestone in unique fashion after recording his first assist of the night on Kyle Connor's opening goal.

On the team's third goal of the night, scored by Jonathan Toews on the power play, Scheifele was originally awarded an assist, but the referees mistook him for Gabriel Vilardi.

The game presentation team at Canada Life Centre brought Scheifele up on the videoboard to congratulate him, but Scheifele shook his head and mouthed to the crowd, "not my apple."

"Well, I thought I heard my name when they initially announced it, and that's why I was like, 'Did I touch it? There's no way.' I knew I didn't," said Scheifele after the win. "I went and told the linesman that it wasn't my assist and it was Gaber's. Then they announced it right away. I was like, 'No, please. Just wait four seconds before you announce it so they can change it.' But you know, I guess it was just meant to be tonight."

It didn't take long before the milestone was actually reached. A hard-fought puck battle in the corner ended with Scheifele coming out with the puck and setting up teammate Dylan DeMelo, who scored on a shot from the point.

When Scheifele was put up on the videoboard again, it was the real deal. The 32-year-old centre had a huge smile and waved to the crowd.

"I feel like he's playing the best hockey of his career this year," said DeMelo after the game. "To see him work on his craft, it's not a surprise he's got this many assists, and he's going to keep going strong."

Scheifele's first assist in the National Hockey League came in a Jets win against the Los Angeles Kings on Oct. 4, 2013. He helped set up a goal by former Jet Evander Kane.

Jets winger Tanner Pearson has only started playing with him at the professional level this season but has witnessed Scheifele's playmaking ability since they were teammates in junior with the Barrie Colts of the Ontario Hockey League.

"You saw it in junior more than anything," said Pearson at his stall after practice on Wednesday. "He had such a passion for the game – and he still does – that he's willing to get better and better, and obviously it's translated."

"You look at the way he plays – I don't know if he's ever shot on a two-on-one, he tries to pass every time," said Pearson. "Even I yell at him to shoot the puck because he does have such a good shot."

In 45 games played so far this season, Scheifele has 22 goals and 32 assists, averaging more than a point per game.

The first selection made by the Jets after the franchise relocated from Atlanta in the 2011 NHL draft (seventh overall), he became the franchise's all-time points leader last October and in games played last November.

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/01/15/winning-streak-continues-as-jets-steamroll-wild>

### ***Winning streak continues as Jets steamroll Wild***

By: Mike McIntyre

ST. PAUL, Minn. — From fragile to ferocious. Slumping to surging. Dormant to dominant.

Oh, what a difference a week can make for the Winnipeg Jets.

Three straight wins against average opponents on home ice had stopped the bleeding and snapped an 11-game slide. That was notable enough.

What happened Thursday night here in St. Paul was something else entirely. The Jets didn't just beat the Minnesota Wild, who are one of the NHL's top teams. They steamrolled them, delivering a 6-2 dismantling that looked every bit like a statement.

To themselves. And, perhaps, the rest of the league.

"Everyone's firing on all cylinders," said centre Mark Scheifele, who led the way with a goal and three assists.

"Guys are making plays, holding on to pucks, just kind of doing what's needed, making the play in front of them. It's been a great team effort. And just gotta keep going.

Six different players lit the lamp and 10 skaters recorded at least a point. Jonathan Toews, Gabe Vilardi and Josh Morrissey each had a goal and an assist, while Tanner Pearson and Logan Stanley had the other tallies.



Goaltender Connor Hellebuyck, who hasn't looked like his usual Vezina Trophy-self lately, was terrific in stopping 32 of 34 shots he's faced. He was especially solid in the opening 13 minutes of the game, with the Jets seemingly half-asleep and outshot 9-0.

"They have a history, especially in this building, of coming out strong in the first periods and we needed Helle, as he had to make a couple of stops, and we kind of weathered the storm," said Jets coach Scott Arniel.

That bought the visitors some valuable time to spring to life, including goals at 19:49 and 19:57 of the opening frame to make it 3-0.

"Just to get those two quick ones like that really quieted the crowd but it also got us feeling pretty good about ourselves, and we had a really good second," said Arniel.

Winnipeg struck three more times in the second period to blow it wide open, chasing rookie sensation Jesper Wallstedt from the Minnesota net.

"This is a tough building to go into against a really good team, so just to get the win in this building is huge," said Scheifele.

"And obviously, we had a kind of a junky start, but from there we kept working and kept doing the right things, just kind of making the play in front of you and we got rewarded."

Winnipeg improves to 19-22-5, winning in enemy territory for the first time since Nov. 29 in Nashville — a span of 10 games. They did extend another quirky streak, skating to a sixth straight victory at Grand Casino Arena dating back to 2023.

Minnesota falls to 26-13-9.

*MEMO TO TEAM CANADA:* It's hard to believe the Team Canada couldn't find a spot for Scheifele at the upcoming Winter Olympics.

Winnipeg's top centre continues to have a career year, now up to 58 points through 46 games after the 13th four-point outing of his career. That has him seventh in NHL scoring, and fourth among all Canadian players trailing only Connor McDavid, Nathan MacKinnon and Macklin Celebrini.

"Everyone in here gets to see him every day and how hard he works and how much he cares about getting better in the game that he plays," said Stanley.

"And he takes a lot of pride in being a 200-foot player, winning face-offs, obviously his offensive game is amazing and it's just cool to see how hard he works at it, and you know hard work pays off. But great teammate, great player, and I really wish he was on the team."

Scheifele is on the stand-by list in case of injury, and it's noteworthy that projected top-six forward Brayden Point recently suffered a lower-body injury. He's considered week-to-week at this point, and you have to wonder if Scheifele might not be first up to fill that spot should it come available.

Games like Thursday night certainly help the cause.

**JOHNNY ON THE SPOT:** There were a lot of hot takes about Toews as he struggled through the first half of his season — with some suggesting Father Time had passed him by.

But the five-day Christmas break has clearly done wonders for the 37-year-old, who now has points in 8 of the 11 games he's played since. That includes goals in four straight outings, the latest coming at 14:08 of the first period.

It came with the Jets enjoying an extended 5-on-3 power play after penalties to Matt Boldy (high-sticking) and Marcus Foligno (tripping) just 32 seconds apart.

Not only did it give the Jets a 1-0 lead, it was Toews' 900th career point — a remarkable milestone for the man formerly known as "Captain Serious." Toews then added No. 901 when he assisted on Morrissey's buzzer-beater at the end of the first period, which came after he won the offensive zone faceoff against Ben Jones.

"Nine-hundred points, that's obviously amazing. He's feeling it, which is awesome," said Arniel. "It took him a while to find his legs, to find his place and his game. Now you see it and he's getting the reward from it."

Toews is up to 18 points (7G, 11A) through 46 games.

"He's been incredible lately," said Scheifele. "We love having him on the power play. He's been great there. And, I think he's just going to continue to get more and more comfortable. And it's been awesome watching him and learning from him."

**THE STANIMAL:** Stanley is going to get paid this summer.

The pending unrestricted free agent couldn't pick a better time to go on an offensive heater. He's now up to eight goals this year — seven more than his previous career best — and it says here all of them have been highlight-reel.

Stanley unleashed a rocket of a slapper that went off the crossbar and in, making sure to use his hand to signal it was a good goal during his celebration.

"Some of the boys were still playing. I was just trying to let him know it was in," Stanley joked afterwards.

The 6-7 blueliner is a unique player, with a long reach and physical side now complemented by an offensive surge.

"Not gonna lie. I've always seen it in him," said Scheifele.

"I've always been a big Stan fan. He's been a guy that I love to work on things with and see him grow. And, I'm like a proud dad for him. He's been, it's been awesome to watch, and that's the thing. He makes even a lot of little plays, not just on the goals that are amazing and make it a pleasure to be on the ice with him. So, you know, I saw it in him.

**KEY PLAY:** Morrissey's goal with three seconds left in the first period made it 3-0 and had Wild fans booing their team off the ice. It ended up being the game-winner.

**THREE STARS:**

1. WPG C Mark Scheifele: 1 goal, 3 assists
2. WPG D Josh Morrissey: 1 goal, 1 assist
3. WPG C Jonathan Toews: 1 goal, 1 assist

*EXTRA, EXTRA:* The Jets and Wild ended up splitting their four-game season series, with the visiting team winning every time.

Winnipeg won the special teams battle in a big way, going 2-for-4 on the power play and killing off all three penalties they took.

Jets forward Morgan Barron returned to the lineup after missing three games with an upper-body injury, drawing the primary assist on Pearson's goal with 11 seconds left in the second period. Rookie forward Danny Zhilkin came out of the lineup as a healthy scratch, joining Gustav Nyquist and Isaak Phillips in that department.

Elias Salomonsson played his fifth career NHL game, replacing the injured Neal Pionk in a pairing with Dylan Samberg. He had an efficient night, playing 18:45 (third among all defencemen) with two shots on goal, a block, a takeaway and going plus-one.

Pionk, along with fellow blue-liners Haydn Fleury and Colin Miller, are all out week-to-week.

The Jets flew home immediately following the game and will face the Toronto Maple Leafs on Saturday night at Canada Life Centre.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/01/15/smooth-skating-salomonsson-back-in-the-lineup>

### ***Smooth-skating Salomonsson back in the lineup Jets call-up Moose defenceman over batch of blue-line injuries***

By: Mike McIntyre

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Elias Salomonsson knew the learning curve would be steep. But the young defenceman figures a tough introduction to life in the National Hockey League will ultimately benefit him in the long run.

Salomonsson, 21, was back in the lineup for the Winnipeg Jets on Thursday night against the Minnesota Wild, fresh off his second career call-up from the Manitoba Moose.

"I'm way more comfortable," he said following the morning skate at Grand Casino Arena.

The first promotion happened back in late November, when the smooth-skating Swede was thrown into the deep end in his debut against the Washington Capitals in D.C. He went minus-two in a 4-3 loss, which included a misplay that led to Connor McMichael's third-period breakaway game-winning goal.

That was quickly followed by games in Carolina and Montreal, followed by his lone big-league home game against Buffalo.

Salomonsson's early NHL numbers don't exactly pop off the page — four games, no goals, no assists, no points, three shots on goal and a minus-four rating — but they hardly tell the whole

story. The 55th-overall pick from 2022 showed several flashes of why he's the most prized blue-line prospect in Winnipeg's system and got more comfortable with each outing.

"Those were tough teams. I think it was valuable for me to play against those teams and see how fast everything is, and try to learn and adapt from that," said Salomonsson.

To his credit, he returned to the AHL and never sulked or pouted, playing rock-solid hockey which made him the obvious choice to fill a big hole in Winnipeg's lineup. Defencemen Neal Pionk, Colin Miller and Haydn Fleury are all out week-to-week with injuries.

"We've been playing some good hockey," Salomonsson said of his past six weeks with the Moose. "There's a lot of older guys there I can learn from, and I think that is helping a lot. Many younger guys down there can learn from them."

Salomonsson has eight points (1 goals, 7 assists) in 25 games with the Moose this season after posting 27 points (5G, 22A) in 53 games as a rookie last season.

He's likely going to get an extended look during this stint, which should benefit both him and the organization in the long run. Miller, Logan Stanley and Luke Schenn are all in the final year of their contracts, which could usher in a bit of a young movement on the back end.

"We have good depth in this organization," said Jets defenceman Dylan Samberg, who was paired with Salomonsson against the Wild.

"We have guys that can come up and fill, which is awesome. We're seeing some new faces around here, which is great. It's unfortunate with the injuries that we've had, but that's part of the season that we're having. When (the schedule) is so condensed guys are going to get injured, but I have confidence in the guys who come up and their ability."

The Jets also have 24-year-old defenceman Isaak Phillips up with them right now following his call-up from the Moose. He's played 56 career NHL games over four seasons with the Chicago Blackhawks, who drafted him in the fifth round in 2020 and traded him to the Jets last year in exchange for blue-line prospect Dmitry Kuzmin.

Ville Heinola, Winnipeg's first round pick from 2019, could also get another look. The 24-year-old Finn has 18 points (2G, 16A) so far this season with the Moose.

Up front, the Jets currently have forward Danny Zhilkin in the fold, who made his NHL debut last week against Edmonton. Although he was a healthy scratch against Minnesota with the return of Morgan Barron from injury, he has impressed with his play.

Forwards Brad Lambert, Parker Ford and Nikita Chibrikov got looks with the Jets earlier in the year, as did goaltenders Thomas Milic and Dom DiVincentiis. There could be more where that came from if Winnipeg doesn't get itself back in the playoff race and moves into "next season" territory down the stretch, which could include trading some veteran pieces.

Salomonsson could eventually represent a Swedish takeover of the Jets, who also have blue-line prospects Alfons Freij (2nd round, 2024) and Sascha Boumedienne (1st round, 2025) in the pipeline. The pair just helped lead Sweden to the gold medal at the World Juniors held in St. Paul. Salomonsson played on the 2024 squad, which won silver.

### **HEY NOW, YOU'RE AN ALL-STAR**

Speaking of Milic, the 22-year-old goaltender has been selected to play in the AHL all-star game which will be held Feb. 11 in Rockford, Ill.

Milic has gone 8-4-2 with a 2.57 goals-against average and .902 save percentage with one shutout in 15 games with the Moose so far this season. He went 0-1-0 with a 3.46 GAA and .871 SV% in one start and two relief appearances with the Jets earlier this season.

Milic, hails from Coquitlam, B.C., was drafted in the fifth-round by the Jets in 2023 and has racked up quite the list of accomplishments and accolades.

In 2023, he helped Canada win the gold medal at the World Juniors, was named the Western Hockey League goaltender of the year that season and chosen for the CHL and WHL all-star teams. Milic was also an ECHL all-star in 2024 as he got his pro career underway after finishing up with the Seattle Thunderbirds.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/01/14/road-worriers>

### **Road worriers**

#### ***Jets looking to snap nine-game road losing streak against Wild***

By: Mike McIntyre

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The final buzzer had just sounded on Tuesday night in downtown Winnipeg and Dylan DeMelo was already thinking about what comes next.

“Now we’ve got to take that act on the road,” the veteran Jets defenceman said shortly after his team had put the finishing touches on a third straight victory to close out a five-game homestand.

Indeed they do. If the Jets are to truly get back in the playoff race, they’re going to have to start winning games in enemy territory. That could be a tough task, considering the club has lost nine straight contests (0-7-2) outside the cozy confines of Canada Life Centre dating all the way back to a Nov. 29 victory in Nashville.

They’ll try to snap the skid by facing one of the league’s top teams, the Minnesota Wild, here on Thursday night. Making life even more difficult is the fact three defencemen — Neal Pionk, Colin Miller and Haydn Fleury — are all suddenly sidelined indefinitely with various injuries.

“We’ve got some bad news going here,” Jets head coach Scott Arniel said following Wednesday’s team skate in Winnipeg prior to boarding the charter.

“Fleury will go week-to-week, Miller will go week-to-week, and Pionk will go week-to-week.”

Fleury was hurt in a Jan. 6 game against Vegas, Miller went down on Jan. 11 against New Jersey and Pionk re-aggravated an existing issue in Tuesday’s 5-4 win over the New York Islanders.

“It’s huge. You get into your top four, that’s a big impact,” said Arniel. “So look to the kids coming in, getting an opportunity. Hopefully they can step up and help us.”

Top blue-line prospect Elias Salomonsson has been summoned from the Manitoba Moose, and he's likely to jump right into the lineup after making his NHL debut earlier this season and appearing in four games with the Jets. Isaak Phillips is also on recall from the farm team as an additional option.

Expect the top three of Josh Morrissey, Dylan Samberg and DeMelo to really be leaned on during this stretch, with Logan Stanley and Luke Schenn taking on expanded roles as well. Those two have been the subject of recent trade rumblings, since they are both in the final year of their existing contracts.

"It's tough to do when you're playing a lot of games, although Josh would like to be out every shift anyway. But you've got to manage the game within the game," said Arniel.

"You've got to see where we're at. That's how we kind of monitor each period. Get a pretty good tell-tale sign of your defenceman's creeping in around nine, 10 minutes, or eight or nine minutes in the first period. It's hard. You've got to see what the score is, where you're at that way, and kind of manage it best you can."

The Jets woke up Wednesday in 31st overall in the NHL and still eight points out of the final Western Conference wild-card playoff spot with 37 regular-season games remaining. Eleven of those will be played in the next 21 days leading into the Olympic break. How the Jets fare in that span will likely determine whether GM Kevin Cheveldayoff enters "sell" mode.

Facing a 26-12-9 Minnesota team that sits fourth-overall in the league and has already beaten them twice in Winnipeg this year — 3-0 on Nov 23 and 4-3 on Dec. 27 — should provide some additional clarity.

"Obviously our rivalry with them, how we play against them... we could be one point apart or as far apart as we are right now, it brings out the best in both of us," said Arniel.

"I think we had a really good game in here the last time we played. I know they've lost a couple at home, some tight ones, and I'm sure they're looking to get back on the board. But at the end of the day we want to keep ourselves rolling."

The Jets beat the Wild 4-3 in overtime on Oct. 28, part of a 4-0-0 start to the season on the road for the Jets (and a 9-3-0 mark out of the gate overall). But Winnipeg has just three wins in 18 away games since (3-13-2).

However, this recent stretch at home has provided at least a glimmer of hope.

"I actually mentioned it to the players (Wednesday). All we're doing is trying to pick off the team ahead of us," said Arniel.

"All we're doing is trying to pick off the team ahead of us."

"There's one team that's one point ahead of us, there's a couple others that are, I think, three points ahead of us. Just pick off the next team. Keep climbing. Keep taking steps. Climb the ladder. Keep trying to do that, and hopefully other things will have to happen with other teams as well. And, hopefully, when you win, they lose and you gain ground."

The Jets recently set an NHL record by losing 13 straight games which were decided by a single goal. But they've now found a way to win two straight games by the narrowest of margins, suggesting they aren't as fragile as they recently were.

"It definitely feels great. Winning is a lot more fun than losing. But we also know it's still a long road ahead of us, and try to take it game by game and go from there," said forward Nino Niederreiter.

"There were certain times (during an 11-game winless stretch) we played well. And there's a lot of times where we just find a way to lose hockey games. And obviously, last three games, it's nice to be on the other side."

*"Winning is a lot more fun than losing."*

Secondary scoring had all but disappeared for the Jets in recent weeks, but suddenly there's no shortage of it. Winnipeg scored 20 times during the five-game homestand, with plenty of ice-cold players heating up. Niederreiter, for example, ended a 17-game pointless streak this past weekend with assists in wins over Los Angeles and New Jersey.

"There's some interesting bounces we had lately, and that's something which we needed to get the guys going, and that definitely helps a lot," said Niederreiter, who is now just three points away from 500 in his career.

All five of Winnipeg's goals against the Islanders came with traffic in front of the net, as screens and tips made life miserable for goaltender Ilya Sorokin. Captain Adam Lowry ultimately scored the game-winner late in the third, deflecting a Pionk point shot.

"That's exactly what we need," said Niederreiter.

There was some good injury news on Wednesday, as forward Morgan Barron shed his non-contact jersey and was a full participant at practice. The powerful, speedy forward who is having a terrific season has missed the past three games with an upper-body ailment but could be an option against the Wild.

Regardless of who's in or who's out, Niederreiter said the Jets need to bring the sense of urgency that was evident during these past three games.

"I mean, there's no (other) option right now, right? We put ourselves in quite a hole," he said. "You take (it) day by day, game by game, and try to find a way to get out of it."

## **Winnipeg Sun**

[https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/the-winnipeg-jets-get-wild-earning-a-6-2-win-over-minnesota/article\\_b9805572-b03d-4919-945d-4b4a2067fba2.html](https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/the-winnipeg-jets-get-wild-earning-a-6-2-win-over-minnesota/article_b9805572-b03d-4919-945d-4b4a2067fba2.html)

### ***The Winnipeg Jets get Wild, earning a 6-2 win over Minnesota***

By Gordon Anderson

It was a two-for-one night at the casino in Minnesota.

The Jets snapped a road losing streak and continued a win streak following a 6-2 triumph over the Wild at Grand Casino Arena in St. Paul on Thursday night.

"We've just been playing better hockey," Mark Scheifele told reporters in St. Paul. "Everyone is firing on all cylinders. The guys are making plays, holding on to pucks, just making the play in front of them. So, it's been a great team effort. We just gotta keep going."

Scheifele scored once and added three assists in the win. He is up to a team-leading 58 points with 23 goals and 35 assists in 46 games played.

After the well-documented 11-game skid ended with a 5-1 win over the Los Angeles Kings last Friday night, the Jets have since picked up four consecutive victories with wins over the New Jersey Devils and New York Islanders, prior to the vanquishing of the Wild.

"Even before this win streak, we were giving up wins," Scheifele said. "We lost the one to Minnesota (coming out of) the break, and, a bunch of other one goal losses that easily could have been ours."

Winnipeg lost 4-3 in overtime to the Wild on Dec. 27. The Jets lost nine one-goal games in that long streak of futility.

Prior to the win in Minnesota, the Jets were far from road warriors as they lost nine consecutive road games following a victory over the Nashville Predators on Nov. 29.

Winnipeg now improves to 8-14-2 on the road.

With the Calgary Flames winning 3-1 over the Chicago Blackhawks on Thursday night, the Jets remain 9th in the wildcard chase, one point behind both Calgary and the St Louis Blues for seventh. Chicago is two points ahead of the locals for sixth.

"All we can do is just keep focusing on the game at hand and that's kind of what we've been doing," Scheifele said. "We'll enjoy the win tonight, and then come tomorrow, we're getting ready for Toronto. So that's kind of been the mentality."

The teams split the season series with Minnesota at two games each. The Jets won both road games and lost both home games.

The Jets have scored 20 goals during this current win streak. The secondary scoring has risen to the occasion as Jonathan Toews has four goals over this four-game span. Tanner Pearson, Josh Morrissey and Gabe Vilardi have two each. Toews, Pearson, Morrissey and Vilardi scored once each on Thursday night.

Logan Stanley also scored for the Jets (19-22-5). Morgan Barron returned to the lineup after missing three games with an injury.

Connor Hellebuyck (12-12-4) stopped 30 of 32 shots to grab the win.

Danila Yurov and Marcus Johansson scored for Minnesota (25-13-9). The Wild have now lost three straight games and four of their last five.



Jesper Wallstedt (12-4-4) earned the loss, allowing six goals in 20 shots in 40 minutes of action. Filip Gustavsson turned aside eight shots in relief duty.

The Jets host the Maple Leafs on Saturday night.

#### *Ice Chips*

Danny Zhilkin, Isaak Philips and Gustav Nyquist were healthy scratches. Colin Miller, Neal Pionk and Haydn Fleury are all on injured reserve.

#### *By the numbers*

The Wild outshot the Jets 10-1 prior to the Toews goal at 14:08 of the first period. In the second period, the Wild outshot the Jets 6-0 prior to the goal by Yurov goal at 4:53 ... Toews notched his 900th NHL point on his goal ... Vilardi leads the team with seven power-play goals ... Of defenceman in the NHL with a minimum of 20 games played, Stanley is fourth with a shooting percentage of 16.7. Stanley has eight goals on 48 shots ... The six goals scored was the most in a road game this season ... The Jets have scored the opening goal in eight consecutive games.

[https://www.winnipegssun.com/sports/jets-defenceman-logan-stanley-among-the-league-s-best/article\\_875d99f7-a6cd-4d0a-8023-e00177710ee1.html](https://www.winnipegssun.com/sports/jets-defenceman-logan-stanley-among-the-league-s-best/article_875d99f7-a6cd-4d0a-8023-e00177710ee1.html)

#### ***Jets defenceman Logan Stanley among the league's best***

By Gordon Anderson

Logan Stanley's latest goal, his eighth of the season, zipped over the left shoulder of Jesper Wallstedt at 9:33 of the second period, helping the Jets to a 6-2 victory over the Minnesota Wild on Thursday night.

"I have seen that shot, and this year we have seen it a lot more," head coach Scott Ariel told reporters in St. Paul. "He has got so much confidence right now, but he hammered that one and I am not sure anybody was expecting that, especially the goalie. He is feeling it. It is great for him."

The shot from the right face-off circle banged off the crossbar prior to landing on the correct side of the goal line, as far as Jets fans are concerned.

The shot registered at 88.4 miles per hour.

"Yeah, it was a good one," Stanley said about the velocity and the location.

According to NHL Edge, Stanley's hardest shot was 97.13 m.p.h. in a Jan. 8 game against the Edmonton Oilers.

Perhaps his offensive production is an aberration, perhaps it is not, but Stanley is among the league's elite shooters from the back end.

Of defenceman who have played a minimum of 20 games, Stanley is fourth with a shooting percentage of 16.7 in 45 games played. Stanley's eight goals have come in 48 shots. In his five complete seasons with the Jets, spanning 202 regular-season games, Stanley scored five goals on 232 shots.

Stanley also has a better shooting percentage than forwards Macklin Celebrini, Jason Robertson, David Pastrnak, Auston Matthews, Kirill Kaprizov, Tage Thompson and teammate Kyle Connor.

"He's been awesome," Mark Scheifele said. "I've always seen it in him. So, I've always been a big Stan fan. He's been a guy that I love to work on things with and see him grow. I'm like a proud dad, and it's been awesome to watch. That's the thing. He makes even a lot of little plays, not just on the goals that are amazing and (that) makes it a pleasure to be on the ice with him."

Scheifele scored his 23rd goal in the win over Minnesota. He also added three assists in the team's fourth consecutive victory.

And expect to see more of the Stanley with Neal Pionk on the injured reserve list.

The club officially placed Pionk on the injured list on Wednesday, retroactive to Tuesday. Pionk aggravated a lower-body injury against the New York Islanders. Pionk's last shift ended at 19:16 of the third period.

On Thursday, Stanley logged 18:04 of ice time. He received 1:00 of power-play time and 2:03 of short-handed action. As a small sample size, meant as a comparison only and not a prediction of future events, the towering d-man played 15:42 with 53 seconds of short-handed time against the Islanders. Going back one game further against the New Jersey Devils, Stanley logged 16:25 of ice time with 33 seconds of short-handed time.

Coming into the game against the Wild, Stanley logged 3:03 of powerplay time in the 44 games prior, averaging five seconds a game. The math is not perfect, but he received nearly 25 per cent of his total power-play time in one game against the Wild. And on the penalty-kill end, Stanley has logged 32:32 of PK time this season, averaging 41 seconds of per game.

And being a UFA at the end of the season, no doubt Stanley will relish the opportunity in an elevated role, for however long that role lasts.

"[Pionk's] a huge loss for us (as a guy who) eats a lot of minutes, so (I will) just try and chip in, be simple and reliable," he said.

The Jets host the Toronto Maple Leafs on Saturday night.

[https://www.winnipegssun.com/sports/winnipeg\\_jets/jets-lose-key-defenceman-neal-pionk-for-crucial-game-stage/article\\_21b399c0-523c-424b-b987-5ac7b8847d4d.html](https://www.winnipegssun.com/sports/winnipeg_jets/jets-lose-key-defenceman-neal-pionk-for-crucial-game-stage/article_21b399c0-523c-424b-b987-5ac7b8847d4d.html)

### ***Pionk loss 'huge' as Jets try to prolong streak***

By Paul Friesen

The Winnipeg Jets have lost one off their top-four defencemen, as Neal Pionk will be out of the lineup for at least a couple of weeks.

Head coach Scott Arniel says Pionk aggravated an undisclosed injury in Tuesday's win over the New York Islanders, describing him as "week-to-week."

The Jets have called up Elias Salomonsson from the farm to fill in, beginning Thursday night in Minnesota.

But the loss of a top-four player, given the schedule grind, won't be insignificant, especially since depth defencemen Haydn Fleury and Colin Miller have also been downgraded to week-to-week.

"It's huge," Arniel said. "When you lose anybody. We've been going through it all year. You get into your top four, that's a big impact. When we get these three (games) in four (days) and four in sixes, it's nice to put new bodies in, fresh legs in there. And we can't really do that.

"So look to the kids coming in, getting an opportunity. Hopefully they can step up and help us."

The other "kid" on hand is Isaak Phillips, recalled from the Manitoba Moose earlier this week.

Winners of three straight, after an 11-game skid sent them to the bottom of the NHL standings, the Jets ride a long-awaited high into Thursday's game with the division-rival Wild.

Dylan Samberg, Pionk's defence partner, says the turnaround shows they stuck together through the bleakest of stretches.

"We went from the highest of highs last year, winning the Presidents' Trophy, to the lowest of lows this year," Samberg said. "We've battled through a lot of adversity and we're starting to come out on top. So we know what we have in this group.

"It's definitely an immense difference. We're starting to have fun again."

Losing streaks like this recent one test a lot of things, including the patience of coaches and management, plus the bonds between teammates.

Forward Cole Koepke went through a different version of it last year with Boston, the Bruins firing their coach and trading their captain.

The Jets have emerged unscathed, if still a long way from a playoff spot.

"Learned a little bit how to work through those things," Koepke said. "But the team has done a really good job this year, and we're on the right side of it now."

The mood, Koepke says, is night and day.

"Before, you grip your stick a little bit, and think nothing's going to go your way. And when you work out of it like we have, it just brings everyone in a good mood at the rink and it's about coming to work, get done what we need to get done. And we have fun while we do it."

Their playoff prospects remain fairly bleak, though, the line still eight points away heading into Wednesday night's schedule, with seven teams in the way.

If that long, dark tunnel is showing a glimmer of light, Arniel doesn't want anybody looking at it.

"I actually mentioned it to the players today. All we're doing is trying to pick off the team ahead of us," the coach said. "Just pick off the next team. Keep climbing. Keep taking steps. Climb the ladder.

"Hopefully when you win, they lose and you gain ground."

Coming off a roller-coaster effort that saw them blow a 3-0 lead, bounce back with two quick goals and hold on for a 5-4 win over the Islanders, the Jets face a Minnesota squad that's where Winnipeg expected to be at this point: among the top-three teams in the Central Division.

The Wild's 61 points is 20 more than the Jets have.

Arniel expects the usual feisty affair, regardless.

"Our rivalry with them... we could be one point apart or as far apart as we are right now, it brings out the best in both of us," he said.

"An elite team," is how Nino Niederreiter described them. "They added some great pieces. We try to build on the last three games and go from there."

The Jets could have forward Morgan Barron back for this one. After missing the last three games, he practised on Wednesday, but Arniel wants to see how he feels in Minnesota.

The Wild have won just four of their last 10 games and are coming off a 5-2 home loss to New Jersey, so they're not exactly on a high.

It's their fourth meeting of the season. Both teams have an overtime win in the other's building, while Minnesota also skated out of Winnipeg with a 3-0 victory in November.

The Jets have gone through a lot since then.

"It's nice to be trending in the right direction," Samberg said. "We have to be, at this point."

[https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg\\_jets/friesen-when-sports-gets-overshadowed-by-real-life/article\\_0bde0b07-a162-4b6b-8c9c-1bfed0ecf0c4.html](https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg_jets/friesen-when-sports-gets-overshadowed-by-real-life/article_0bde0b07-a162-4b6b-8c9c-1bfed0ecf0c4.html)

### ***FRIESEN: When sports gets overshadowed by real life***

Paul Friesen

I'm a sports reporter and columnist, have been for nearly 30 years, all at The Winnipeg Sun.

But today I find myself writing something that has almost nothing to do with sports. It's far bigger.

And while I've always known there are many more important things in life, I usually don't feel the need to write about them.

Oh, I've made exceptions.

The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on Sept. 11, 2001, was one of them.

I remember talking to Blue Bombers offensive line coach John Gibson, who was from Washington, D.C., as he watched news from back home instead of game film that morning.

Gibson and some Winnipeg players knew people who worked in the World Trade Center, so football was suddenly the last thing on their minds.

Fast-forward to 2018, and another school shooting in the U.S. that caused then-Jets captain Blake Wheeler to weigh in on the political climate and lack of gun control in his home country.

A couple years later, Wheeler was one of the NHLers who spoke out against the killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, which set off protests in his home city, another turn of events that had me veering off the beaten sports path.

"My hometown is burning," was the Wheeler tweet that got my attention that day.

Today, we're back in Minneapolis again, where this time his hometown is reeling, the epicentre of clashes between ICE, the federal police force, and civilians, one already shot to death.

Why would a Winnipeg-based sportswriter pay any attention to it, much less write about it? Sports is the great escape, after all.

Because the whole thing is hitting close to home – closer all the time.

The neighbour to the south that we've known so well is changing dramatically, already at a place we could not have imagined just a few years ago.

The Jets were playing the Wild in St. Paul on Thursday, and before they left I asked forward Cole Koepke about the disturbing events.

Koepke is from the Duluth area and had plenty of family coming to the game, while his wife's family is in the Twin Cities.

"I haven't asked a ton about it," Koepke said. "I've talked to a couple of my buddies more. They live in the Minneapolis area. It's unfortunate what's going on down there. But I'm not super, super political. I don't know a whole ton of it, so I won't touch on it too much."

One thing he would say: he's shocked.

"These things pop up and you're like, 'Geez, how can that go on anywhere?' And then when it hits at home, you don't see it coming at all."

Maybe we should have.

Maybe we need to divert our eyes from the hockey or football game more often, and take a look around. Read, listen, ask questions, discuss.

I know, it's far easier to tune it out. The danger in that, though, is when we finally are forced to tune in, it might be too late.

Minneapolis is eight hours down the road. The border, little more than an hour.

That invisible line is suddenly our best friend. But will that last?

The Jets are focused on another line, the one separating them from a playoff spot. As they should be. It's their job.

And yes, part of mine is to follow that quest, make you want to read about it. That won't change.

But it's always been, for me at least, more about the people playing the games, the people coaching them.

Occasionally, like 9-11, the pandemic and the George Floyd murder, the occasion usurps the scores and standings. Even the insulated, well-to-do professional athlete is affected.

What kind of world will their kids grow up in? Where is this heading?

Koepke doesn't have kids, yet. At 27, he only became an every-day NHLer last year, with Boston.

Thursday was just his 130th career game. So he's got some big fish to fry – like making sure he stays in the lineup.

"I don't think about it too much," he said of the unrest, and the future. "I think we'll figure it out."

I don't blame him. I lean toward optimism, too.

With that, he packed up his equipment bag for the short flight across an invisible border to a place where the eyes of a nation are riveted, not on hockey, but on ICE.

After meeting his mom for dinner that night, he'd get back in hockey-player mode.

His Jets, after all, have work to do.

### **Global Winnipeg**

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11615939/winnipeg-jets-extend-win-streak-to-four-games-by-thrashing-wild-6-2/>

### ***Winnipeg Jets extend win streak to four games by thrashing Wild 6-2***

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson

The Winnipeg Jets may have entered their meeting in Minnesota Thursday night on a three-game win streak, but they were still riding a nine-game road losing streak.

They put a loud and emphatic end to that, crushing the Wild 6-2 for their first win outside of Winnipeg since Nov. 29 in Nashville.

It took the Jets over 14 minutes to register their first shot on goal of the game, but they scored three times in the next six minutes and never looked back en route to a fourth straight victory.

Mark Scheifele matched a career-high with four points and Jonathan Toews scored for the fourth straight game as his first period 5-on-3 power play goal flipped the momentum.

"They have a history, especially in this building, of being real strong in the first period," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. "We needed Helly (Connor Hellebuyck). He had to make a couple stops there and kinda weathered the storm. Obviously, scoring that goal on the power play kinda settled us down and obviously moved forward from there."

Scheifele, Tanner Pearson, Josh Morrissey, Logan Stanley and Gabriel Vilardi also scored goals for Winnipeg.

The six-goal performance matches a season-high and after averaging just 2.3 goals per game during their 11-game losing skid, the Jets have averaged five goals per night during their current win streak.

"We're working for our bounces and creating that with hard work," said Jets defenceman Logan Stanley. "It's definitely a good feeling coming in here, being up, and having, maybe not a good first period, but a good end to the period."

After scoring with a two-man advantage, the Jets scored twice in the opening period's final 10 seconds.

"You get a 5-on-3, you got to take advantage," said Scheifele. "Especially with the way the start of the game went. So, obviously that was a big goal on a 5-on-3 and then to get two right at the end of the period was kinda a backbreaker."

Toews has clearly found his stride following a rough start to the campaign after missing the past two seasons. He recorded his 900th career point in the win, giving him five points over his last four games.

"He's feeling it, which is awesome," Arniel said. "Hopefully he feels it right through the end of the season. But it took him awhile to kinda find his legs, find his, sorta his place, and his game. Now you see it and getting the rewards from it."

Toews is just the third Manitoban to reach 900 NHL points behind Bobby Clarke and Andy Bathgate.

Minnesota actually dominated play for much of the first period, outshooting the Jets 10-0 in the first 13 minutes as Winnipeg barely touched the puck but Hellebuyck stood tall to keep the score 0-0.

Things turned when Matt Boldy took a high-sticking penalty in the offensive zone at the 12:43 mark, which was then compounded by a Marcus Foligno tripping penalty that gave the Jets a 5-on-3 for 1:28.

Winnipeg made Minnesota pay as Toews banged home a loose puck off a rebound from their first shot on goal in the game.

The goal gave Winnipeg life as they outshot Minnesota 8-1 over the duration of the period, the latter two shots providing a stunning end to the first.

With time winding down, the Jets dumped the puck into the Wild end with Quinn Hughes getting the puck from his goalie in the corner. Under pressure from Pearson, Hughes sent a weak clearing attempt up the boards that Dylan DeMelo stopped before sending a shot on goal.

Jesper Wallstedt easily saved that shot but Pearson was there to collect the rebound, and though he was denied on his first follow-up attempt, he roofed the second one over a sprawled Wallstedt for his third goal in five games with 10.5 seconds left in the first.

One would have thought that would be it for the scoring, but the Wild sloppily iced the puck off the ensuing faceoff, giving the Jets one last chance in the offensive zone.

Executing a set play, Toews won the faceoff back to Scheifele, who dropped the puck back to the point for a Morrissey one-timer that beat Wallstedt with 2.3 seconds on the clock.

A stunned St. Paul crowd booed its team as the horn sounded to end what turned out to be a disastrous period for the Wild.

Minnesota cut into the Jets' advantage just under five minutes into the second when Danila Yurov got free in the slot, took a nice pass from the corner from Jake Middleton and rifled it past Hellebuyck.

But the Wild got into more penalty trouble as the period went along, which proved to be rather costly.

Winnipeg did not score while Mats Zuccarello was in the box for tripping, but just three seconds after his penalty expired and before he could get back into the play, the Jets made it 4-1.

Stanley kept the puck in at the Minnesota blue line and tried to send it on net but it was blocked by Foligno; however, Stanley was able to get it back and skated down to the faceoff dot before unleashing a full-windup slapshot that went bar-down on Wallstedt for his eighth goal of the season.

Minnesota was penalized again a few minutes later when Nico Sturm was given an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, yelling at the refs after Hughes tripped over Hellebuyck on a breakaway chance for which no call was given.

On the ensuing power play, after a scramble in front of Wallstedt, Scheifele got the puck back to the point where Morrissey fired a shot that missed wide. Winnipeg got a great bounce as the puck caromed off the boards and right to the stick of Vilardi for a tap-in goal to make it 5-1.

After the Jets killed off an Alex Iafallo penalty, Kyle Connor hit Iafallo with a pass as he stepped out of the penalty box. Iafallo carried it deep into the Minnesota zone before passing it to Scheifele at the faceoff dot. He ripped a shot off the post and in for his 23rd of the season, making it 6-1 after 40 minutes and giving Scheifele a fourth point in the game.

The second intermission also spelled the end of Wallstedt's night as Filip Gustavsson took over for the third period.

Not much happened in the final frame, save for a Marcus Johansson goal with 2:42 remaining to make the final score 6-2.



Hellebuyck was rock solid in goal for Winnipeg, stopping 32 shots while the Jets have now scored 20 goals over this four-game win streak.

Story continues below advertisement

They'll look to make it five in a row when they host the Toronto Maple Leafs on Saturday night. Pregame coverage on 680 CJOB begins at 4 p.m. with the puck dropping just after 6 p.m.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11616494/analysis-shannon-winnipeg-jets-four-wins/>

### ***ANALYSIS: Jets turning the corner, but is it too late?***

By John Shannon CJOB

Seven days and four victories later, the temperature around the Winnipeg Jets has been lowered by a few degrees.

Wins against Los Angeles, New Jersey, the New York Islanders and now Minnesota have allowed the team to regain a bit of its swagger.

Perhaps the season isn't lost. Perhaps all that talk about the Avalanche, Stars and Wild being the cream of the crop in the Central (with the Jets an afterthought) will die down for a while.

It would be easy to point to Thursday night's raucous victory in St. Paul as a turning point of this strange season, but that might be premature. Indications are positive for the Jets, but there is still some work to be done.

Winnipeg now has 43 points in 46 games. It's actually hard to imagine that they only have 36 games remaining in the regular season. The consensus among hockey people is that it will take 92 points to get a wild-card spot in the post-season. That means the Jets have to win 25 of their last 36 games, and jump over five other teams, to get to the post-season. They are three games under NHL .500; they have to go 14 games over .500 the rest of the way.

Doable? Yes. Difficult? For sure.

It appears that many of the strengths that this team possessed last season and had disappeared during the losing streak have returned: depth scoring, solid special teams, 200-foot hockey and contributions from throughout the lineup.

They've also had Vezina-calibre goaltending from Connor Hellebuyck, the surprising season of Logan Stanley continues and Jonathan Toews — who has weathered the storm of an inconsistent return to the NHL to become that second-line centre many assumed he would become.

Now that winning feeling of four games has to turn into four more games, and four more after that, for the post-season to be a reality. They can't afford any letdown the rest of the way.

You just hope it's not too late.

## **The Hockey News**

<https://ca.sports.yahoo.com/news/report-jets-may-hold-onto-165753119.html>

### ***Report: Jets May Hold Onto Niederreiter, Veterans If Surge Continues***

By Jake Tye

Recent reports from insiders around the NHL suggest the Winnipeg Jets could be preparing to move some veteran pieces if their disappointing season continues, with one name that has surfaced being winger Nino Niederreiter.

The 33-year-old recently reached the 1,000-game milestone earlier this season, but beyond that accomplishment his production has been largely underwhelming. Niederreiter is once again on pace for roughly 30 points, a level of output that has become familiar in recent years.

While his numbers may not jump off the page, his experience and playoff pedigree could make him an appealing option for a contending team looking to add depth and leadership.

A potential trade, however, may not be imminent. TSN insider Chris Johnston addressed the situation on his self-titled show, explaining that Winnipeg's recent three-game winning streak could impact the organization's willingness to move veterans like Niederreiter.

"They've won a couple games so, let's see where things go, I know they lost a lot of games prior to winning a couple games, but I'm convinced they're still going to look at their team some of your late January, sort of in the same window with the other clubs I was talking about, and make a call on which way they're going," Johnston explained.

"If they veer into the sell, guys like Niederreiter I think make some sense, and they do have pieces to move off of but as long as they still feel competitive, as long as they think they're in the race, if they start winning games, the calculus changes."

Johnston added further insight into the mindset of Winnipeg's front office, noting that the management group is still uncertain about the team's direction. He explained that if the Jets believe they can remain competitive in the playoff race, they are unlikely to dismantle the roster in favor of an early retool for next season.

Currently, Winnipeg sits eight points out of a wild card spot. While the Jets have appeared out of contention for much of the season, their recent surge has at least reopened the door to a potential late playoff push.

Clarity on the team's direction should come sooner rather than later. The Jets are facing a demanding stretch over their next 11 games, beginning Thursday night against the Minnesota Wild. That stretch also includes matchups against the Toronto Maple Leafs, two games against the Florida Panthers, as well as contests versus the Detroit Red Wings, Tampa Bay Lightning, Dallas Stars, and Montreal Canadiens.

If Winnipeg can navigate this difficult schedule and emerge with more wins than losses, it could significantly alter their approach ahead of the trade deadline. Instead of selling off veteran assets like Niederreiter, the Jets may find themselves in position to add pieces in support of a postseason push.

## **The Athletic**

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6946609/2026/01/15/winnipeg-jets-dads-advice/>

### ***Winnipeg Jets dads give their best fatherly advice: 'It's an amazing ride'***

By Murat Ates

My daughter was born in early January, eyes open, crying softly, placed immediately on her mom's chest. Hayley held her. I cut the cord. In the short time I've known her, holding our daughter to my chest as she sleeps has been the greatest joy of my life.

Weeks before she was born, I wrote myself a note naming my two biggest priorities as her dad.

- Whatever she's into, I'm into, too. I hope she loves hockey and shows an interest in her Turkish roots and I'll make all of those things possible but our daughter will love what she loves and I will learn whatever I can about it.
- She will see me love her mother.

I'm going to hold onto these values but there are also practical matters to consider. I understand the concept of swaddling and have successfully pulled it off. When she wakes up in the middle of the night, how do we know if it's because she's hungry or has filled her diaper or just wants to be held?

It turns out there are resources for all of these things, including the doctors and nurses and myriad medical staff we've already met. There are classes, books and good old-fashioned trial and error, along with the confidence we get from knowing we're playing zone defence as opposed to man-to-man because there are two of us and one of her.

There is also a large group of NHL players to talk to — and that's exactly what I did from training camp until the week before my daughter was born. We could start with 1,100-game NHL veteran Luke Schenn, who thought he'd mastered the art of braiding his daughter's hair, only to be flabbergasted when she came home from watching "Frozen" and asked him for "The Elsa." We could start with Hart Trophy winner, Connor Hellebuyck, who geeked out on the value of independent play with his second child to the point of making it his No. 1 point of advice.

But we're going straight to the delivery room and the moment Dylan DeMelo was punched in the face.

#### ***'It's like Mike Tyson said'***

Dylan and Jessica DeMelo had their first son, Caleb, in January 2021 — in the height of COVID-19 restrictions. Their second son, Eddie, was born in July 2024 via cesarean section.

Both births were a whirlwind.

Caleb was delivered without complications, just before the 2021 NHL season began. Jessica was made to push through her labour while wearing a mask. Dylan remembers holding one of her legs while a nurse held the other and a doctor "played center field." The couple had chosen to leave the sex of their baby a mystery.

"I remember Jess was pushing and the head came out. I'm like, 'Oh, my God!' She's like, 'What happened?' 'Oh no, everything's fine!' And then he came out and he was a boy. We had a boy!"

The doctor placed Caleb on Jessica's chest while DeMelo gave "an extra fist pump" that they'd had a boy. This is where a famous heavyweight boxer comes in.

"It's like Mike Tyson said. Everybody's got a plan until they're punched in the face. Well, you're going to get punched in the face as soon as the baby's born," DeMelo said. "You're trying to figure out the swaddle. Cleaning the diaper for the first time. Checking to see if the baby's breathing when it's sleeping."

DeMelo remembers the sensation that his perspective had been completely transformed. The importance of small moments, of being present, and of being patient had never struck him quite so profoundly. Then, step by step, the DeMelos figured it out. They started to feel like they had a handle on things. A few years later, Jessica got pregnant again, and DeMelo joked that the family was going to have to switch from zone defence to man-to-man. Eddie was born and the DeMelos' lives changed one more time.

It turns out man-to-man defence is tougher than playing a zone.

"Some days you feel outnumbered and, holy moly, you're in it," DeMelo said. "But it's all a blessing. It's an amazing ride. All of the snuggles, all of the cries, all of the diaper changes, all of the laughs, it's all worth it in the end."

*'She pooped all over the floor'*

Eric Comrie remembers calling his wife, Haley, from the road when their daughter, Capri, was a baby.

"Haley goes, 'Capri lost her diaper and she pooped all over the floor. The dogs are trying to eat it and they're throwing up,'" Comrie said. "I'm like, 'So things aren't going so well ... I'm going to go to sleep in my fancy hotel room now.'"

The experience may not always involve dogs but it is universal: NHL moms do the overwhelming majority of the work. Players are on the road. A lot. When they're home, they're at the rink far more often than the parts we get to see.

"We get a lot of the credit but, behind the scenes, the wives who have kids are working twice as hard as we are," Schenn said. "To manage three kids while we're on a 10-day road trip isn't easy."

An NHL mom's workload is intense even when the team is at home. On a typical game day, a player might wake up and head to the rink for the morning skate before their child's day has even started. With video sessions, on-ice work, post-skate recovery, media and treatment of any ongoing ailments, a player's day is full long before puck drop. That leaves mom at home for the majority of the day.

"We're gone 80ish days a year," Neal Pionk said. "Add summer training, where we train every morning, so we miss half that day ... I'm not home half the time."

Every player who spoke to The Athletic for this story made it clear their wife was the star of their household.

"I know it's not a 50/50 split. It just can't be, with the occupation that we have," DeMelo said. "When I see Jess really grinding and sacrificing a lot, I know I need to pick it up on my end."

*'I didn't see my son for two weeks after he was born'*

Being an NHL dad is easier than being a regular dad in most ways. Your salary is beyond that of most people, grossing nearly \$1 million dollars a year — minimum. Your team employs someone to manage family relations, meaning you've got an established network of night nurses, doulas and babysitters.

But money can't buy time.

"We're very lucky. We play a sport that pays us very well," Comrie said. "But there are also challenges."

It may sound absurd, but let's start with the concept of paternity leave. I'll be taking time off from The Athletic through the end of the Olympic break and then a couple more months later in the year.

"I've had friends that take paternity leave and they're off for six months with their spouse," DeMelo said. "They ask me, 'How much time are you taking off?' I'm like, 'I took a week off and I was back training in August.'"

"I didn't see my son for two weeks after he was born," Comrie said. "That was tough for me. And when my daughter was born, I was on the road again 12 hours later. I didn't see her for a week and a half. You get great things as a hockey player in terms of how much you can provide for them but you're also missing out on a lot of important days."

It's understood that NHL players will miss games for their child's literal birth, but no other day is spared.

"When my second son was born, it was COVID. We went into the bubble and ended up going the distance with Tampa," Schenn said. "I left when he was two months old and I came back when he was five months old."

Playing in the NHL is a dream, full stop. Comrie reflected on the pride they take in being able to provide for their wife and kids.

Comrie employs a nanny, so his wife is never outnumbered by their two kids at home. She does thoughtful things for him, too, such as filling his car with pictures of their two kids as an added boost during Winnipeg's recent on-ice struggles. Comrie said he just wants Haley to have the best possible life as a mom — and as a person outside of motherhood.

"I get as much help as I can. She's a human being. She needs a break as well," Comrie said. "Haley needs to be able to live her life and not just be bogged down by kids the whole time. For her mental health as well, I believe it's very important for her to be able to live the life that she wants to live while being the best mother that she can be."

*'What's the cost of two eggs?'*

Schenn's little sister was born when he was 13 years old. He's loved kids since meeting her as a baby. When his daughter was born almost three years ago, Schenn tapped into his younger years playing with his little sister.

"I love being hands-on as much as I can," Schenn said. "I'm sure I'm not doing everything perfectly by any means but I try to be as involved as I can. As much as my kids are learning every day, I'm learning every day — trying to become a better dad."

Logan Stanley trails Schenn in NHL experience by almost 900 games. On the ice, his fuse can be short. Off of it, Stanley is a different person altogether.

"It takes me a lot to get my heart rate up away from the rink," Stanley said. "At home, with utensils, food gets all over the floor. Whatever, I'll wipe it up when she's done. It takes two minutes ... What's five minutes of them figuring it out on their own? They're a little kid. You've got to let them figure out their emotions."

"Or I got her cracking eggs when she was 1. So she knows how to crack eggs and put them in. But the first time, she takes an egg ... Just flattens it on the table. All right, let's try another one. She's figuring it out, like, 'OK, it's hard on the outside but it's delicate. It can break.'"

What gave him the idea to put an egg in a 1-year-old's hand?

"I was just curious. 'What's she going to do if I give her this egg?'" Stanley said. "We weren't even cooking. She walked around and then... Pow. Then she drops one on the floor. Well, here's another one. I mean, what's the cost of two eggs if she's learning?"

#### *Tough guys as girl dads: Pink toenails and more*

One of the most fascinating things about NHL players as dads is the shift from their tough, on-ice personas to tender, doting parents. This is particularly evident with girl dads.

"For tough hockey guys, daughters are interesting," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said. "Daughters are amazing. They're unbelievable. For guys, it's a learning lesson for us. Maybe you had sisters and got it in bits and pieces, but it humbles you — and man-oh-man, there's no better feeling."

Stanley arrived at Jets camp with pink toenails, to the side-eyes of his teammates and a few friendly chirps. When the 6-foot-7 defenceman's teammates dug into him about his fresh pedicure, Stanley just laughed. He said he's 100 percent in on embracing his tender side as Evie's dad.

"I play Barbies all day. She paints my nails," Stanley said. "The joy that you see in her face when she gets to paint my toenails ... I wore it for the first two weeks of training camp."

It's been a particularly good season on the ice for Stanley. He's already set new personal bests in goals (7) and points (14) and it seems distinctly possible that his pink toenails were a good luck charm.

Does his now-3-year-old daughter notice he's in the midst of a career year?

“No, she just likes when they say my full name on TV,” he said. “And now she just calls me that: ‘Hi Logan Stanley!’ I’m like, ‘No, no, you’ve got to call me daddy. Or, at worst, dad. But you can’t call me Logan Stanley anymore.’ She thinks it’s funny, so it is what it is.”

Comrie’s daughter, Capri, and Stanley’s daughter, Evie, go to the same gymnastics class. A typical scene involves both dads jumping around, doing rolls and flips alongside their daughters. Comrie said he and Stanley are the only dads in the whole class, alongside a host of moms, and he can’t control himself from chuckling as Stanley goes all-in on all of the stunts with Evie.

#### *Final pieces of wisdom*

“I’ll give you the one piece of advice that I give everyone,” Hellebuyck said. “Let your child get good at independent play. It’s very important.”

It was one of several pieces of wisdom Jets dads shared as we prepared for the birth of our daughter. Not every child is the same, not every family is the same, but we all enter parenthood with expectations about what it might look like.

Sometimes we get it right. The car seat we chose clips into place just like the YouTube video says it should. Sometimes, we’re surprised by what we get wrong.

“Before I was a parent, I thought babies had to hate baths,” Pionk said. “Complete opposite. If she’s fussing or teething or whatever, we throw her in the tub and she has a great time.”

NHL players have spent their lives building and refining a set of skills that separate them from the majority of the population, making a life in professional sports possible. Their advantages are pronounced but that doesn’t make them immune to the struggles of parenthood.

“The biggest thing is communication and just being honest with your partner: ‘I’m exhausted. I need some help,’” DeMelo said. “Whether that’s babysitters or family, sometimes you feel like it’s your kid so you have to do it all, but it really does take a village.”