

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-lightning-put-on-defensive-clinic-to-beat-jets>

***THREE THINGS: Lightning put on defensive clinic to beat Jets  
Kyle Connor scores his 24th in 4-1 loss to the Lightning***

By Jamie Thomas

Nikita Kucherov recorded his 10th multi-point game of the month of January helping the Tampa Bay Lightning defeat the Winnipeg Jets 4-1 at Benchmark International Arena. Kyle Connor scored his 24th of the season for the only goal of the night for Winnipeg who saw their record drop to 21-25-7. Connor Hellebuyck made 33 saves for the Jets who remain in the state of Florida and will face the Panthers Saturday afternoon.

***GIVING UP FIRST GOAL***

Something that has given the Jets issues this season is giving up the game's first goal as they came into action Thursday night 2-16-3 when the opposition scores first. The Jets had two great chances to open the scoring in the first period as Morgan Barron was denied by Andrei Vasilevskiy on a breakaway and Cole Perfetti also had a great chance when he stepped around JJ Moser and his shot was turned aside by the Lightning goaltender. That allowed Dominic James to get the first goal of the night at 14:58 of the first, Tampa would add to that 1:37 into the second, Darren Raddysh's point shot got by Connor Hellebuyck.

***TOP LINE AGAIN***

Gabriel Vilardi rejoined Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor in the second period of Tuesday's game against New Jersey and that line helped Winnipeg beat the Devils 4-3. The trio pulled the Jets within one after Kyle Connor redirected a point shot from Dylan Samberg at 12:25 of the middle frame.

"Tampa is not going to let you play on the outside and give you some kind of one-timer from the distance," said Scott Arniel.

"You look at our goal, we got traffic in front of Vasilevskiy with a high tip and he didn't see it and that has to be a constant. It was too far between, (as) we had to do it (more) on a consistent basis."

Unfortunately for the Jets, it didn't take Tampa long to restore their two-goal lead when Yanni Gourde scored on an elite pass from Nikita Kucherov during a delayed penalty. That goal came less than three minutes after Connor had got Winnipeg on the scoreboard.

***LIGHTNING DEFENSIVE DISPLAY***

With the Lightning up by two goals to start the third period, the home team locked it down and really gave the Jets nothing to work with outshooting them 16-4. In fact, the

Jets had 11 shots in the opening period but could only get 12 more over the final 40 minutes.

"I mean, they're a good team. They kind of stick to their system really well. They have a ton of skill, but they play hard, and I would say they're really disciplined in terms of giving up their chances and sticking to their systems," said Morgan Barron.

"And sometimes that requires us to be patient and keep putting pucks behind them and probably didn't do a good enough job of that at times."

### **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-tampa-bay-lightning-game-recap-january-29-2026>

### ***Raddysh, Gourde each has goal, 2 assists in Lightning victory against Jets Kucherov extends point streak to 7, Tampa Bay gets 16th win in 18 games***

By Corey Long

TAMPA -- Darren Raddysh and Yanni Gourde each had a goal and two assists, and the Tampa Bay Lightning defeated the Winnipeg Jets 4-1 at Benchmark International Arena on Thursday.

Nikita Kucherov had a goal and an assist, and Zemgus Girgensons had two assists for the Lightning (34-14-4), who are 16-1-1 in their past 18 games and have won seven straight at home. Andrei Vasilevskiy made 22 saves.

"We need to do this just to compete in [the Atlantic] Division," Tampa Bay coach Jon Cooper said. "I don't think I've ever seen our division this tight, actually any division as tight as the Atlantic has been with so many teams competing for a playoff spot."

It was the final game for the Lightning before they host the Boston Bruins in the 2026 Navy Federal Credit Union NHL Stadium Series at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa on Sunday (6:30 p.m. ET; ESPN, SN, TVAS). The game will coincide with Gasparilla Pirate Fest weekend here.

"It's going to be great, it's going to be great for this city, especially with the celebration of Gasparilla. Once a year it's our mini Mardi Gras," Cooper said. "It's so much fun and to be capped out with an outdoor game that quite frankly I think is going to be magical."

Kyle Connor scored for the Jets (21-25-7), who have lost three of four (1-2-1). Connor Hellebuyck made 33 saves.

"I thought early on we were able to advance the puck and create some chances," Winnipeg captain Adam Lowry said. "In the second period I think we started feeding into

that transition game. They do a great job of stretching guys out. ... We kind of fed into that. It's just management. It's frustrating because I thought we had been playing a decent hockey game."

Dominic James gave Tampa Bay a 1-0 lead at 14:58 of the first period with a shot from the left circle after Raddysh sent him in following a stretch pass by J.J. Moser.

Raddysh extended the lead to 2-0 at 1:37 of the second period with a low slap shot from just inside the blue line, scoring for the third straight game.

"I think we got away from what we wanted to in the second period a little bit," Raddysh said, "but we did what we wanted in the third and played in their end and shut them down a little bit to keep momentum on our side. Guys are buying in. They know what the job is and everyone is pulling their weight."

Connor made it 2-1 at 12:25, scoring in the left face-off circle on a short-side tip of Dylan Samberg's shot with Gabriel Vilardi providing the screen.

"You look at our goal, we got traffic in front of Vasilevskiy with a high tip and he didn't see it, and that has to be a constant," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "It was too far between when we did that. We had to do it on a consistent basis."

Gourde pushed the Lightning lead to 3-1 at 15:17. He scored from between the circles by redirecting a quick centering pass from Kucherov.

Kucherov then scored an empty-net goal at 18:52 of the third period for the 4-1 final. He has 15 points (four goals, 11 assists) in a seven-game point streak.

"I think structurally we've been really good and we just know that we don't need to force anything in the third period when we have the lead," Gourde said. "We play our game and put the puck deep. And we try to grind out a few shifts in the O-zone to help us keep momentum and prevent them from creating offense."

*NOTES:* Lightning defenseman Ryan McDonagh had three shots on goal and three blocked shots in 20:35 of ice time in his first game since Dec. 22. He missed 15 games with a lower-body injury. ... Raddysh had his sixth three-point game of the season. ... Vasilevskiy extended his point streak to 14 games (13-0-1) and tied the second-longest of his career (14 games in 2017-18). He had a 21-game point streak in 2019-20, the longest run in Tampa Bay history.

## **Associated Press**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/raddysh-gourde-and-kucherov-help-surging-lightning-beat-jets/>

### ***Jets can't keep pace in loss to surging Lightning***

By Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Darren Raddysh and Yanni Gourde each had a goal and two assists to lead the Tampa Bay Lightning to a 4-1 victory over the Winnipeg Jets on Thursday night.

Nikita Kucherov scored his 27th goal on an empty-netter and added his 55th assist. Dominic James also scored for Tampa Bay, which improved to 16-1-1 in its past 18 games. Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 22 shots to extend his streak without a regulation loss to 14 games (13-0-1).

Kyle Connor scored for Winnipeg, while Connor Hellebuyck finished with 33 saves.

The Lightning won their seventh consecutive home game.

James put Tampa Bay up 1-0 in the first period. J.J. Moser found Raddysh for a tap-pass to James, who skated in alone on the left wing side for a quick shot that went between Hellebuyck's legs.

Raddysh notched his 15th goal of the season and scored for the third consecutive game with a slap shot from the right point at 1:37 of the second period. After Connor cut the Lightning lead in half, Gourde answered during a delayed penalty call on Winnipeg in the middle slot, redirecting a pass from Kucherov at 15:17.

Kucherov, who scored with 1:08 left, has 31 points in January, the third time he's recorded at least 30 points in a month to tie Connor McDavid for most among active players. The only other players with as many are Wayne Gretzky, Mario Lemieux, Phil Esposito, Bryan Trottier, Steve Yzerman and Jaromir Jagr.

Kucherov is second in the league in assists and third in points.

### ***Up next***

Jets: At Florida on Saturday.

Lightning: Host Boston on Sunday in an outdoor game at Raymond James Stadium, home to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

**TSN.ca**

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/2026/01/30/should-the-jets-be-buyers-or-sellers-at-the-trade-deadline/>

### ***Should the Jets be buyers or sellers at the trade deadline? (VIDEO)***

Is lack of scoring the biggest reason the Jets are not in a playoff spot? Should Winnipeg be buyers or sellers at the trade deadline? TSN Hockey analyst Cameron Gaunce joins SportsCentre to give his thoughts.

<https://www.tsn.ca/olympics/article/morrissey-hungry-for-olympic-gold/>

### ***Morrissey hungry for Olympic gold***

By Danielle Bain

Winnipeg Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey knows all about winning gold medals for his country, but the chance to be a part of Milano Cortina 2026 has him hungry for more.

The 30-year-old blueliner is gearing up for his first Olympics, determined to bring his best after missing the championship game at last year's 4 Nations Face-Off tournament against the Americans.

"There's a hunger level for me to obviously have a great tournament and push to win a gold medal, and hope to be a part of that celebration that I wasn't able to be a part of last year," said Morrissey in a one-on-one chat after practice in late January.

Morrissey, who was paired with St. Louis Blues defenceman Colton Parayko at the 4 Nations Face-Off, had to pull out of the championship game because of an illness.

"It was devastating not to be on the ice in the game, but I think almost more devastating to not be part of the celebration afterwards," said Morrissey. "Definitely just hungry to be back there with the guys and obviously have a chance to hopefully come out on top and get to experience that sort of joy and jubilation of winning."

Although it was likely that Morrissey would earn a spot on Canada's roster, it wasn't made official until Dec. 31, when Hockey Canada unveiled the full group. Based on Morrissey's experience and current season with the Jets, there's no surprise he got the call.

He currently leads the team in plus/minus at plus-12 and is averaging the most time on ice at 24:32 per game. Not only is his defensive game both strong and relied upon, offensively he has 10 goals and 32 assists in 52 games.

Morrissey couldn't be more excited for the opportunity at Milano Cortina 2026 – one that hasn't been available to NHL players since the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

"Representing Canada at the highest level is a dream come true," he said. "To go to the Olympic Games ... it's so much bigger than just hockey."

Morrissey's earliest memories include watching Team Canada win men's hockey gold in 2002 in Salt Lake City, Utah. And just like so many Canadian hockey fans, Morrissey remembers where he was when Sidney Crosby scored the "golden goal," securing Canada's gold medal in the men's hockey event on home soil at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games.

"When Sid scored, I remember exactly where I was – I was at my mom's place," said Morrissey. "I think it was mid-afternoon, and I just remember going crazy there with my brother."

As a lifelong hockey player and fan, Morrissey still can't wrap his head around the fact that he too has the potential to be a part of a historic moment.

"Being a fan and being a proud Canadian and as a young hockey player thinking or dreaming that maybe that could be me one day, it's pretty surreal that I'm actually going to have that opportunity," said Morrissey.

Morrissey has had success at the international level before. He was part of the gold-medal-winning team at both the 2013 IIHF U18 World Championship and 2015 World Juniors, and helped lead Canada to a silver medal at the 2017 World Championship.

According to the Jets alternate captain, buying in and accepting your role early is key when you have top-tier players coming together for a short period of time.

"When you're representing your country and doing that with the best players, it's really something that it's not a hard ask to adjust your game if that's what's required," said Morrissey. "I think teams in short-term competition that have the best buy-in and the players that kind of commit to whatever their role is as quickly as possible generally have more success in those events ... I think if you ask every guy in that room, they wouldn't care how many minutes they played or what role they were playing if they could achieve that [winning]."

Many of the players named to Team Canada's roster have never been to an Olympic Games before, but Morrissey said those who have offered some key advice for first-timers.

"They all kind of encourage us first-time guys to experience other sports if you can," said Morrissey. "Obviously we're busy, but try to see some other events and then also just interact with other athletes, whether that's in the village or wherever ... It's special

just to feel that Olympic camaraderie, so that's something I'm really excited to kind of be a part of that community."

He'll get to take in all the excitement with friends and family as well. After all, an Italian winter getaway wasn't the toughest pitch to his inner circle.

"Olympics in Italy definitely wasn't a tough sell to the family and friends," joked Morrissey. "I think immediate family, and then I've got some friends joining as well at various points throughout the Games. It'll be a big group, and I'm excited to share any big experience with them."

The men's hockey tournament begins Feb. 11, 2026, with Canada's first preliminary game against Czechia on Feb. 12, 2026.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/01/27/let-that-be-your-welcome-to-the-nhl-moment>

***'Let that be your welcome to the NHL moment'  
Former Jet Dillon talks twists and turns on road to 1,000-plus game career***

By: Ken Wiebe

NEWARK, N.J. — Brenden Dillon was almost a member of the Manitoba Bisons men's hockey team.

The New Jersey Devils defenceman shared the turn-back-the-clock confession when talking about his hockey journey toward 1,000 NHL games and beyond, before facing the Winnipeg Jets on Tuesday night.

"For me, not getting drafted into the WHL draft or the NHL draft, you start to doubt every once in a while," said Dillon. "That season (2010-11), I was starting to have UBC (University of British Columbia) and U of A (Alberta) and even University of Manitoba reaching out asking, 'what are you thinking next year for college and university?'

"That was my reality at the time."

Dillon never got around to having to make the choice about which U Sports program to join or what faculty he might prefer.

That's because fate intervened during his 20-year-old season with the Seattle Thunderbirds of the Western Hockey League.

One December day, near the Christmas break, Thunderbirds general manager Russ Farwell let Dillon know that a couple of NHL executives from the Dallas Stars were interested in a meeting with him.

After hearing who the meeting was with, Dillon did some research on Les Jackson and Shane Churla.

Dillon wasn't going to leave anything to chance. He pulled out all the stops and was dressed to impress.

"I wore a suit and a tie. I had my hair done," said Dillon. "At the time, it was the biggest meeting I had ever had. I had never talked to that level of an NHL executive."

Jackson and Churla were already familiar with the player, the meeting with Dillon was about getting to know the person — to see what made him tick.

Dillon came away from that meeting encouraged about what the future could bring.

"I met them at a Kent Station Panera Bread, right across the street from where the Thunderbirds play," said Dillon. "It was my overage year and I was fortunate to be named captain that year and have things go well for me. The (Stars) were the first team that talked to me.

"When Shane and Les talked to me about my skillset and how it could translate into pro hockey, it started to click with me, that, 'wow, this could be a possibility.' As the year transpired, it turned into an NHL contract which, at the time, was the biggest deal ever for me in my hockey career. I owe those guys a lot."

Dillon, now 35, didn't need long to give the Stars some valuable return on their investment as an undrafted free agent signing.

Near the end of his first full professional season, Dillon was recalled by the Stars and made his debut at American Airlines Center against the St. Louis Blues.

"At home, in Dallas, on the first shift of the game, I came around the net on a breakout and David Backes absolutely blew me up and he knocked the wind out of me," said Dillon. "When I got back to the bench, (Stars assistant coach, the late) Paul Jerrard, the defensive coach and Winnipegger, he kind of leaned over and he said, 'hey, let's let that be your welcome to the NHL moment.'"

That welcome to the NHL moment was the first of many memories for Dillon on the road to hitting and eclipsing 1,000 games — which is an outstanding accomplishment — and would go on to knock the wind out of many opponents, given his hard-nosed and hard-hitting nature.

"It's just incredible," said Dillon, taking a moment to reflect on the journey. "The clip that seemed to go viral a little bit was that I just wanted to play one, which was the truth. I grew up playing minor hockey for my hometown and then going off to junior hockey and playing in the Western Hockey League. With how crazy the schedule is in the NHL, I



haven't really had a chance to sit back and be like, 'wow, I've played 1,000 games.' But then again, I've been fortunate. I think I was the 17th undrafted D-man to do it.

"Looking back at the journey, all of the teammates and all of the places I got to play and then to play in Canada and to have my family see a good chunk of those 1,000. All of it, it's just amazing."

When Dillon was presented with his silver stick to capture the milestone, one of the logos he saw belonged to the Jets, where he played 246 of those games over three seasons.

"To be able to be closer to home and to be able to get to go play in Canada, in Winnipeg, where I still talk to and consider a lot of those guys still on the team to be very good friends," said Dillon, noting that his daughter was born in Winnipeg. "To be part of the Whiteouts. I still remember the goose bumps from when we played Vegas (in the Stanley Cup playoffs), that stuff that just sticks with me."

In signing a three-year deal with the Devils in the summer of 2024, Dillon joined his fifth NHL organization.

He's loved every one of his stops, but has also been subjected to the business side of the game, getting traded on three separate occasions: from the Washington Capitals to the Jets, from the San Jose Sharks to the Capitals and that first deal that sent him from the Stars to the Sharks.

"At the time, getting traded to San Jose, it felt like my life was over," said Dillon. "The tears, the emotion, I had never been traded before. I didn't know what that looked like, as a young, single guy who had grown up together with those guys in the AHL. First games, first goal. You think I'm going to play 10 or 15 years and I'll retire in Dallas and life will be good. That's just not the way that the book was scripted for me."

That script included a few more twists and turns, whether it was working with Hall of Famer Larry Robinson, who coached the defence with the Sharks when he arrived, skating alongside Alex Ovechkin (who would become the greatest goal scorer in NHL history) or playing with a future Hart Trophy winner in Connor Hellebuyck.

Making Dillon's ride even more impressive is how he's done everything the hard way and earned every shift that he's taken.

"I love the way he plays, I really admire his game," said Jets defenceman Luke Schenn. "He just competes every single night, does a lot of hard things that probably don't get noticed all the time, whether it's blocking shots, sticking up for teammates, playing physical, obviously solid defensively and he makes a good outlet pass, too."

“He’s just a total pro. The first thing that comes to mind is whether you’ve got a veteran team or a young team, that’s the type of guy that you want to have on your team. He does everything the correct way.”

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/01/29/jets-overpowered-by-surging-lightning>

### ***Jets overpowered by surging Lightning***

By: Ken Wiebe

TAMPA, Fla. — Scott Arniel isn’t one to toss around compliments just for the sake of stroking the ego of the opponent.

But when the head coach of the Winnipeg Jets was asked about the remarkable run the Tampa Bay Lightning were on following the morning skate, Arniel wasn’t shy about sharing his admiration.

“Obviously, we know Colorado real well, but I’ve got these guys as the second best team in the league,” said Arniel. “I’ve been watching them the last month and a half. They’re really good. They’re showing it with their play, with how aggressive they are. They come at you hard, both with and without the puck.”

Those words proved to be prescient, as the Lightning showed off those aggressive qualities in earning a 4-1 victory over the Jets on Thursday night at Benchmark International Arena.

Following a strong first period where the Jets gave up a solitary goal to Dominic James, they gave up another just 1:37 into the second period and that left them chasing the game for the duration.

Even after pulling within one at 12:25 of the middle stanza, the Lightning restored the two-goal cushion just under three minutes later and didn’t give up much after that.

“Puck management and puck decisions,” said Jets captain Adam Lowry. “Early on, we were able to advance the puck and create some chances that way. In the second period, we started feeding into that transition game.

“It’s frustrating, because I thought we had been playing a decent hockey game, we were right in it, and then they make it 2-0, we fight to get back and then kind of feed right back into their offence.”

The Jets are now 1-18-2 this season when trailing after two periods of play, which means the rallies have been few and far between.

"You can't play on the outside against a team like that, you can't turn pucks over," said Arniel. "For me, those are the areas that you have to do on a consistent basis."

The Lightning are now 16-1-1 during their past 18 games as they've rocketed to the top of the Eastern Conference and Atlantic Division standings, despite dealing with some key injuries.

"That's the biggest thing. They're missing some incredible players," said Lowry.

"Obviously they still have some incredible players in the lineup. The young guys that they've introduced, the guys with not a lot of experience, have really come in with a lot of speed. They play hard, they really transition the puck well and they're a really well-built team."

With the loss, the Jets slip to 1-1 on the road trip and drop to 21-25-7 for the season.

They'll continue this four-game swing on Saturday afternoon against the Florida Panthers.

Here's a closer look at what unfolded:

### *The goal*

The Jets lone goal came on a nifty redirection from Kyle Connor.

The initial shot from the left point was provided by Jets defenceman Dylan Samberg and Connor did a great job of tipping the puck past Lightning goalie Andrei Vasilevski.

Although five-on-five goals have often been tough to come by, the Jets have generated several of them by getting to the net and getting the puck from down low to high in the offensive zone.

"Our D have done a great job lately of getting off the walls, getting pucks through and forwards getting to the net," said Lowry. "You can't just be one dimensional when it comes to creating offence. We've got to look for the slot, you've got to attack the net, too. You can't just settle for low to high constantly. You have to have some different looks to maybe create some space, force their forwards to sag a bit more in the zone."

The other side of the coin is that the Jets need to do a better job of getting to the blue paint to create traffic to find more goals on rebounds, tips and screens.

"Especially in the third period, we didn't do enough, we didn't do enough to get pucks off the wall, get inside and attack the net the inside out," said Arniel. "That is a will, that is a compete thing. You have to decide, are you going to go inside where the heavy hitting is happening? That is something you have got to do. If you don't want to do it, then you end having numbers (of goals) like us (on Thursday)."

### *The quality chances*

Jets forward Morgan Barron had two of the best scoring chances of the game for the visitors.

In the first period, he was sent in on a partial breakaway and made a power move to his backhand, but Vasilevskiy stretched out his left leg and denied Barron his eighth goal of the campaign.

“He’s one of the best goalies in the world. I just feel like I had some speed and tried to pull it around him,” said Barron. “But, he obviously spreads out and takes up a lot of space, so I thought I made a good move. But at the end of the day, he’s a good goalie, so he just made a good save.”

In the third period, Barron elected to shoot on a two-on-one rush and his shot was labelled, but it clanged off the iron instead.

Barron was impressed by the way the Lightning played.

“I would say they’re really disciplined in terms of giving up their chances and sticking to their systems,” said Barron. “Sometimes that requires us to be patient and keep putting pucks behind them. We probably didn’t do a good enough job of that at the time. I felt like it kind of required us to play a simple game. And we had success when we did that, but probably didn’t do it consistently enough.”

### *The key play*

While enjoying a six-on-five advantage with a delayed penalty call on the horizon, Nikita Kucherov found Yanni Gourde with a slap pass for a redirection in the slot that restored a two-goal cushion at 15:17 of the second period.

### *The three stars*

Darren Raddysh, Lightning, One goal, two assists.

Yanni Gourde, Lightning, One goal, two assists.

Nikita Kucherov, Lightning, Empty-net goal, plus an assist.

### *The scare*

Kucherov left the game late in the first period after an awkward collision with Jets defenceman Logan Stanley.

Kucherov was trying to find space in front of the net, while Stanley was trying to get back into position in coverage when the two players came together somewhat unexpectedly.

Kucherov was down on the ice in discomfort and needed some attention, eventually leaving the ice for the room.

Fortunately for the Lightning, Kucherov came out to start the second period and chipped in an assist with a beautiful feed to Gourde and added an empty-net goal with 68 seconds to go in regulation for good measure.

Kucherov is having a Hart Trophy type of season, with 27 goals and 82 points in 48 games this season.

### *Extra! Extra!*

Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck made his 34th start of the season and finished with 33 saves, giving him a save percentage of .917 or higher for the fourth time in his past seven starts.

Vasilevskiy, who is the front-runner for the Vezina Trophy along with New York Islanders netminder Ilya Sorokin, made 22 saves. Vasilevskiy shaved his goals-against average to 2.04 while raising his save percentage to .921.

The Jets scratches were defenceman Isaak Phillips and forward Gustav Nyquist. Defenceman Neal Pionk has been on the ice during the road trip as he works his way back from a lower-body issue, but he's still working through some pain and isn't expected to return until after the Olympic break.

Strathclair product Conor Geekie remains one of the top prospects in the Lightning system and he's having an excellent season with the Syracuse Crunch of the American Hockey League, recording 11 goals and 35 points through 35 AHL games. Geekie, the 11th overall pick in the 2022 NHL Draft, had one assist in six games with the Lightning this season while chipping in eight goals and 14 points in 52 NHL games as a rookie in 2024-25.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/01/29/samberg-pays-it-forward-to-salomonsson>

### ***Samberg pays it forward to Salomonsson Jets' defenceman happy to play mentor for young blue-liner***

By: Ken Wiebe

TAMPA, Fla. — It wasn't all that long ago when the proverbial skate was on the other foot for Dylan Samberg.

The Winnipeg Jets defenceman could only smile and chuckle when asked about the idea of serving as a mentor for top prospect Elias Salomonsson after the morning skate and prior to taking on the Tampa Bay Lightning on Thursday night.

"It's weird. I was in his shoes a few years ago," said Samberg, who turned 27 last week. "Now to be called a mentor is a little bit different. It makes me feel old. It's good. I'm just

trying to help him as much as possible and trying to make sure he has fun while he's doing it."

The fun factor has been apparent for both Samberg and Salomonsson of late, as the duo has been seeing plenty of high-leverage minutes against the most skilled forwards of the opponents in recent games.

Samberg benefitted from playing alongside the affable Nate Schmidt during his first few seasons of regular NHL duty and he's been more than happy to pay it forward to Salomonsson.

"He's definitely building his confidence," said Samberg, who is into his fourth full season as a regular and, after tonight, will be up to 253 NHL games. "You can see it game to game, and I think he feels a bit more established and more comfortable which is awesome to see. He's starting to get up in the rush and everything. He's turning into an everyday NHL defenceman, which is nice to see."

Seeing substantial growth in a short period of time is something Samberg is familiar with, given how he was able to excel in second-pairing minutes last season.

That promotion was warranted, but how he handled the additional responsibility served notice that he was ready to take the next step in his personal development.

"I didn't know anything about Sammy last year, to be honest with you," said Jets defenceman Luke Schenn, who was acquired prior to the NHL trade deadline last March and quickly found himself paired with Samberg after an injury to Neal Pionk. "I was so impressed with the way he carried himself and handled himself. He's always calm and steady and can play those big, heavy matchups each and every night.

"That's when I learned a lot about him and his calm demeanour. He's doing a great job playing with (Salomonsson). They've been rock solid for us."

Salomonsson got his first taste of NHL action in late November, suiting up in four games before he was returned to the Manitoba Moose of the American Hockey League for some additional seasoning.

That stint gave Salomonsson an idea of what it was like to make the jump, it also allowed him to feel an additional layer of comfort when he returned to the NHL earlier this month.

Given how steady he's been playing, it's easy to forget that Thursday was just his 10th game in the NHL.

"There were a lot of firsts for him when he came up the first time. We were in some tough buildings on the road," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

“Now, he’s a little more settled. He recognizes that when he uses his skill set that he can be a really good defender. I like the way he jumps up (in the rush). He’s got some really good vision with the puck. And it’s great to see that a guy gets an opportunity early in the year, he went back down (to the AHL) and came back up and took advantage of that ice time that was put in front of him.”

The comparisons between Salomonsson and Samberg are fitting as both players have a high level of hockey intelligence to go with strong mobility and willingness to defend first, coupled with the ability to make efficient zone exits with a crisp first pass.

“You know what, those two have been really good,” said Arniel. “Sal’s feet and Sammy’s feet are the two things that jump out at me the most. They both have great ability to work laterally and work back for pucks quickly. You see a lot of that, where they’re back and beating the opposition’s forecheck. Sammy has helped Sal and Sal has been really good with Sammy as well.”

That’s the thing about this budding defensive partnership: it’s been mutually beneficial.

Although it’s clear that Samberg has elevated his game of late — as he’s been leaned on more heavily with the absence Pionk (lower body injury, out since Jan. 15) — Salomonsson’s ability to have the game slow down, at least in terms of his ability to process information quickly, has allowed both players to flourish.

It will be interesting to see how the pairings shake down once Pionk returns to action after the Olympic break, but one thing is certain: Salomonsson looks like someone that warrants a longer look during the stretch run and he’s looking more and more like a full-time NHLer.

“One thing that stands out is his skating ability and when you have that skating ability, you’re able to get up in the play and you’re able to get back,” said Schenn. “He has good gaps and he can close out plays off the rush and he’s moving the puck really well. He’s got some poise out there and he’s going to be a great defenceman for this organization for a long time.”

Salomonsson is someone that should bring some extra edge to the defence corps once he gets even more settled into life in the big leagues.

“He’s got really good positioning,” said Schenn. “There are different ways to play with an edge, whether that’s getting in guys’ faces or being physical. He’s only going to grow as a player.”

## **Winnipeg Sun**

[https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/a-compete-thing-jets-lose-4-1-to-the-lightning/article\\_d0400359-6074-421d-b688-d45f2125a61e.html](https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/a-compete-thing-jets-lose-4-1-to-the-lightning/article_d0400359-6074-421d-b688-d45f2125a61e.html)

### ***'A compete thing,' Jets lose 4-1 to the Lightning***

By Gordon Anderson

Once again, behind on the scoreboard and heading for home, but nary a whisper from the Jets.

"In the third period they were doing a good job of keeping their numbers above our numbers and trying not to let us get inside, that was another thing for us, especially in the third, we didn't do enough to get pucks off the wall and get inside and attack the net from the inside out," head coach Scott Arniel told reporters in Tampa Bay after a 4-1 loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning on Thursday night.

Trailing 3-1, the Jets could only muster four shots on the Tampa net in the final stanza. The home side fired 15 shots at Connor Hellebuyck. Final shots were 37-23 for the Lightning.

The Jets are 1-18-2 when trailing after 40 minutes.

The Jets pulled Hellebuyck from the net for the extra attacker with 2:44 remaining in the game, but the only shot on goal came when Nikita Kucherov found the empty net at 18:52 to close out the scoring. Hellebuyck (13-15-6) stopped 33 shots.

"They stick to their system well," Morgan Barron said. "They have a ton of skill, but they play hard, and they're really disciplined in terms of giving up their (not giving up) chances and sticking to their systems."

Barron had the best chance in the first period when Cole Koepke sent him in alone, but Andrei Vasilevskiy traced Barron and made a left leg save.

"I thought I made a good move," Barron said. "He's a good goalie, so he just made a good save."

Kyle Connor scored the only goal for Winnipeg (20-25-6). Mark Scheifele picked up his team leading 38th assist.

Dominic James, Darren Raddysh and Yanni Gourde also scored for the Lightning (34-13-4). Raddysh had a three-point night. He has had three points in a game on six different occasions this season. Tamps has won seven in a row at home.



The next home match for the Lightning is on Sunday against the Boston Bruins in the Stadium Series game at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa.

Vasilevskiy (24-7-3) turned aside 22 of 23 shots. Coming into league action on Thursday, he was second in wins with 23 and first in goal against (2.07) and save percentage (.920). He remains second in wins and improves his goals against to 2.04 and improves his save percentage to .921.

The Jets are in Sunrise to face the Florida Panthers on Saturday afternoon.

### *Ice Chips*

Gustav Nyquist and Isaak Phillips were scratched.

### *Public enemy #1*

Logan Stanley was booed by those in attendance from the drop of the puck. He didn't make any more fans when he collided with Kucherov inside the Jets zone at 11:41 of the first period. On replay, it didn't seem like Stanley didn't see the forward crossing diagonally into the low slot. Stanley turned back towards the net and blasted the Lightning forward to the ice in the face-off circle to the left of the net with a hard hit to shoulder/head area. There was no penalty on the play. Gourde skated over to have a few words with Stanley, but that was the limit of his participation. Kucherov returned to start the second period.

### *In the mirror*

Although the offensive numbers differ, Raddysh and Stanley are alike in some circumstances.

Raddysh has been having a banner offensive year so far from the blue line. The 6-foot-1 defenceman has 15 goals in 46 games this season. In his three previous seasons with the Bolts, the 29-year-old Toronto native scored 13 goals combined.

Stanley has also had a breakout in the goal-scoring department with eight goals in 52 games this season. In his five previous seasons combined, the 27-year-old Waterloo, Ont., native has scored five goals.

Stanley has played 254 NHL games. The undrafted Raddysh has played 222 games. Raddysh is in the final year of a two-year deal that is paying him \$US 975,000 per. A first-round selection in 2016, Stanley is in the final year of his two-year deal that is paying him US \$1.25 million per.

They are both enter unrestricted free agency at the end of the season.

## **The Athletic**

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/7002984/2026/01/30/nhl-trade-deadline-under-the-radar-players/>

### ***Under-the-radar NHL trade candidates: 10 players who are falling out of favor***

By Harman Dayal and Chris Johnston

Which NHL players are falling out of favor or perhaps not getting the opportunity they could receive elsewhere?

The signs aren't hard to pick up on if you pay close attention. Players in this category often go through a significant dip in offensive production, ice time, role or performance. That, or they're struggling to carve out a meaningful role in the first place.

We've already spent time covering the big trade deadline targets. Here, we will highlight under-the-radar trade candidates falling out of favor. This doesn't guarantee they'll be dealt by the March 6 deadline — some of these players could be shopped in the summer, or their teams may be forced to ultimately hold the bag if there's limited trade interest. Maybe a few of these players even figure it out with their current team.

But one way or another, here are 10 players whose stock is dropping internally and who have a decent chance of moving teams before the 2026-27 season starts.

#### ***Gustav Nyquist, RW, Winnipeg Jets***

Even though he's more associated with being a playmaker than a goal scorer, it's hard to ignore the fact that Nyquist has zero goals through 32 games this season. That's a pretty glaring sign that the one-year, \$3.25 million contract he signed with the Winnipeg Jets in free agency last summer has not yielded anything close to its expected value.

Now Nyquist has been banished to the press box, scratched for 12 of 15 games since the start of January. He needs to be producing offense to create value in the lineup.

Even at age 36, Nyquist remains a strong skater with offensive flair. He's just two years removed from a 75-point season in Nashville, but saw his output drop to 28 points in 79 games split between the Predators and Minnesota Wild last season.

Nyquist has been moved ahead of the trade deadline three times previously in his career and will be hoping for a fourth opportunity to join a contender for a playoff run.