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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/blog-yager-set-to-begin-pro-career>

***BLOG: Yager set to begin pro career***

***Yager: "I'm ready for it."***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – After a fantastic career in major junior hockey, Brayden Yager is set to begin another journey.  
His pro hockey career.

"It's awesome," said Yager following a skate with his fellow Jets rookies on Wednesday.

"Obviously, you look forward to this moment as a young kid and finally, you're going into the season where you're starting to play pro is pretty cool and I'm ready for it."

Yager, who was traded to the Jets from the Penguins just over a year ago, will not just be happy to be at Jets training camp when it opens a week from today, he has bigger plans than that.

"For me, I want to make the NHL. I know the situation of the team. Obviously, they've got a great team, lots of great players," said Yager.

"But I'm 20 years old now and I'm turning pro too so I've got to fight for a job too. So yeah, that's the goal coming into camp. I want to earn a spot on the team. That's all there really is to say. I want to earn a spot on the team."

The Saskatoon product will be one of the key offensive pieces for the Jets rookies when they travel to Montreal this weekend for the 2025 Prospect Showdown. Yager skated with Nikita Chibrikov and Fabian Wagner on Wednesday, both his wingers played for the Manitoba Moose last season.

"Obviously, two really good players, who have a year or two of pro experience already and that's something that can only help me. It's tough to have chemistry right off the bat, but that's the whole point of having a couple of skates and practices before we head out there," said Yager.

"Two easy-going guys and I'm sure we'll do our best to develop a little bit of chemistry before getting there (to Montreal)."

Moose head coach Mark Morrison will be behind the bench this weekend for the Jets rookies, he got a good look at Yager at the 2024 Young Stars Classic in Penticton last year.

"Yeah, I mean, he's obviously a smart hockey player. He's got all sorts of skill, we're gonna just see what he does here in camp," said Morrison.

"He's a good player, there's no question about it, I think we've seen him on the ice. He controls the puck well, he makes great plays."

These rookie camps are nothing new for Yager as this is the third time he has gone through this type of situation, his first coming in 2023, when he was drafted in the first round by the

Pittsburgh Penguins. That fall, he got to be around Sidney Crosby, a three-time Stanley Cup winner. The 20-year-old will now get a chance to take in some of the wisdom from another three-time winner, Jonathan Toews.

"For sure. I got to shake his hand and meet him briefly the other day, just grabbing food. Obviously, a great guy. For me, it was always Jonathan Toews and Sidney Crosby. Just the 200-foot game and the leadership," said Yager.

"I've been fortunate enough, where I got drafted in Pittsburgh, I got to be around Sid and now I've got the chance to be around Jonathan Toews. It's a pretty cool opportunity and I'll try to hang around him as much as I can during camp and learn as much as I can, for sure."

***BLOG: Schenn impressed with Jets off-season additions***  
***Schenn: "It's going to be great to get everyone back together."***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – No matter what level hockey players are at, familiarity remains important.

Luke Schenn enters his 18th season in the National Hockey League and first full season with the Jets after being traded to Winnipeg before the trade deadline. Schenn played 15 regular season contests and added 11 more playoff games to his resume. Not only does he have more comfort with his teammates and coaches, his family will be with him as well.

"First and foremost, everyone was super welcoming last year and (helped) me fit right in. I just came here solo by myself last year, without my family and this year, I've got my family here - which is a huge positive for us and personally," said Schenn after an hour-long skate at hockey for all centre.

"That's a big step. But on top of that, just the familiarity with everyone around here and knowing what the expectations are and how the organization is run. It's more of a seamless transition, rather than being the new guy or the new kid in class."

As excited as fans were last season when the Jets brought in Schenn, one of the newest acquisitions, Jonathan Toews has this city buzzing on and off the ice. The 35-year-old defenceman was also thrilled with a couple other signings the team made.

"In every off-season, every organization goes through changes and we're no different. You lose a couple of guys in free agency, and you gain a couple awesome veteran players who have won Stanley Cups before, with Toews coming in. I got the chance to skate with him yesterday and he looks incredible. He's still got it, for sure. In my opinion," said Schenn.

"It's going to be exciting for everyone around here to watch him again. Then a couple of familiar faces. I played with Tanner Pearson in Vancouver and in LA, so another familiar guy. And then, Gus Nyquist, who I played with in Nashville. It's been a positive off-season for the organization here and it's going to be great to get everyone back together."

Toews will be back next week along with many other veterans who will be arriving in the Manitoba capital with training camp less than two weeks away. Schenn feels that the three-time Stanley Cup winner will help the Jets in many ways in their pursuit of the franchise's first championship.

"He probably wouldn't even have to say a word the entire year, just his presence, walking around and being here would be enough. But when you've got three (Stanley) Cups and the resume he has, in terms of being a captain for so long in the league, being a winner, playing for Hockey Canada internationally. You name it, he's got the resume you dream of as a kid for sure. For him to come back, with everything he's gone through personally and to give it a go in his hometown here, it's going to be such a positive for every player in this room and the organization and just the city of Winnipeg as a whole," said Schenn.

"I was probably just as excited as probably every fan here when I saw the signing. I played against him lots over the years and got to know him a little bit. I have a lot of buddies who played with him in Chicago. It's pretty awesome that he chose to come to Winnipeg and everyone is excited to have him."

### **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/connor-hellebuyck-discusses-winnipeg-jets-expectations-olympics-with-nhl-com>

### ***Hellebuyck talks Olympics, expectations for Jets in Q&A with NHL.com Goalie also discusses playoff intensity, workload, repeat chances for Vezina, Hart***

By Dan Rosen

HENDERSON, Nev. -- Connor Hellebuyck spent the summer preparing to do more and to be even better in what could be the biggest season of his life.

The Winnipeg Jets goalie will be defending the Hart Trophy as NHL most valuable player. He will be defending the Vezina Trophy as the League's top goalie. He won each last season, going 47-12-3 with a 2.00 goals-against average, .925 save percentage and eight shutouts, becoming the first goalie to pull off that feat since Carey Price in 2014-15.

Hellebuyck will again be the backbone of the Jets, who won the Presidents' Trophy last season as the team with the best regular-season record before being eliminated in the Western Conference Second Round. They're among the favorites again in the West and remain a legitimate Stanley Cup contender.

On top of all of that, Hellebuyck also has the chance to be the United States' No. 1 goalie at the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 and an opportunity to help the Americans win gold for the first time since the "Miracle on Ice" in 1980.

Hellebuyck spoke about everything up for grabs for him this season along with his beliefs as a No. 1 goalie and his process to maintain his status during an interview with NHL.com at the NHL/NHLPA North American Player Media Tour Wednesday.

*When you have a season like you had last year, rolling through it the way you did, where do your thoughts go in the summer as you're training and you're thinking about getting back to Winnipeg?*

"I was thinking, 'How can we take that to another level? How can we continue to build?' Just because you had success doesn't mean you're going to have success every single day. So how

can we continue to build that? That's what I love about the game and playing the game, is there's always more to learn. There's always adapting with the game and how the game is changing. So, for me, it was what's the next step. I believe it's managing stress levels. Near the end of the season when you get into the playoffs, the stress is just immediately higher. Everyone is staring at you and trying to point out your wrongs. It comes down to really just getting yourself in your bubble, playing your game, worrying about what you want to do and what you like to see."

*Can you work on that or is that just a mental thing?*

"It's a mental thing but you can work on it in practice. Say the practice isn't going perfectly, instead of getting all stressed out about it and bent out about it, just give yourself a chance to think about it and adjust the things you want to adjust and continue on just playing instead of letting that build up there and frustrate you."

*Is that the difference for goalies between playoff hockey and regular season hockey, the stress level of it? Is the stress level the biggest difference?*

"I would say probably, yeah. That and the playoff game is so team oriented. There's never one guy that's going to get you through it. If there's one guy that's having a really good playoffs, well I can promise you that there's 19 other guys that are contributing to his success. The thing I've learned is, no one guy should be blamed and no one guy should be put on a pedestal. You need everybody."

*Are you able to put yourself in your own bubble during the playoffs or is it harder to do?*

"Yeah, I'm definitely able to. I mean, it doesn't matter if you lose by one goal or you lose by 10 goals, at the end of the day, it's a loss. You've got to move on and win the next one. Stats really just fly out the window. You don't have to care about stats. Stats are important for contracts and the business side of things, but when the playoffs come around you don't really care about that. It's did you win or did you lose."

*When you were rolling in the regular season last year, what were you feeling? Describe your emotion, your preparation. How did you keep it going?*

"Well, I managed my rollercoaster really well last year. That being said, the team was playing great last year. They were scoring goals. They were keeping chances down. It made my life a lot easier and made the game predictable, and that's one of my strengths. So they played right into my strengths. But for me personally I managed the rollercoaster. Any time something bad would happen, I was immediately throwing it away and not worrying about it. I wasn't giving it a second thought. Same old process of watching video and sometimes when you're doing really well you say, 'OK, let's bank this video for later,' so when you do start to come down you can go back and watch it and remember, 'OK, things are good.' So, the whole management side of things, that's really important. But when I was in the mix of it, it was just another game. I would always tell (backup goalie) Eric (Comrie), we had a bunch of little, I wouldn't say superstitions but routines that we love and just crack us up that just kept the game light. We were like kids again having fun. It's so important not to overthink it, just go out there and have fun."

*This year could be a huge year for you with all you can accomplish with the Jets, aiming to be the United States' No. 1 goalie at the Olympics, defending the Hart and Vezina, trying to deliver*

*in the playoffs. What do you think about what this year and the potential of this season could be for you?*

"For me I'm kind of going into it as just another season, just another season. We're continuing to build, but I don't want to bring expectations into it. I think expectations kill. I've seen it enough. We're a good team but sometimes you don't win when you expect to win, and you win when you don't expect to win. Really just trying to keep all expectations off the table and go in with a fresh slate. We're going to build our game the way we ended last year, put our best foot forward and let everything fall into place."

*Because you had the experience last year of the 4 Nations and building to that and then coming off of that, do you think it'll make it easier to build toward the Olympics and come off of that provided you're there?*

"Absolutely. I think the 4 Nations was really good for not only on the ice, because now I know what to expect, what the game is going to be, but for all the off-ice stuff, what to do with the families, where I'm staying, the travel, the new players, meeting new guys. It helps to bring stress levels down, worry levels down. You're kind of just going one day at a time, just go and do your thing."

*You've brought up stress levels a few times. I wonder, did you used to be a stressed out goalie and have you learned to manage that over time?*

"I was never stressed a lot. I was always really good at controlling my emotions. But there was always a point in the season where I would get burnt, have to get it off my chest with my goalie coach and then we were back to square one. Managing your stress levels is something through the years that I've identified through the years that can enhance your consistency. I keep saying it because it's so important for consistency."

*It used to be that goalies would play 60 or more games regularly. Things have changed toward being a closer split among two goalies per team, but you have played at least 60 games in four straight seasons and six of the past eight. It likely would have been eight straight if not for the shortened seasons in 2019-20 and 2020-21 due to the pandemic. Why is it important for you to do that and how are you able to do it consistently?*

"Yeah, the trend is the split, but I think that is like a [political] movement in that someone got lucky and made it work and now everyone else thinks, 'Oh, that's the right way to do it.' I don't agree with that. I think the best way to bring out the best part of yourself is to play and get into a rhythm. For me, I would like to go back to the days of 70-plus games. I think you can stay in a rhythm and once you're confident you can just ride it and you don't really have to think a whole lot, you're just playing because you're feeling it every single night. The caveat that goes with that is the management. The problem with [goalies playing more games] is because the demand on the goalie with practices and stress levels are so high because teams don't let the goalie and the goalie coach do their thing. That's what we do really well in Winnipeg, we realize that our needs are separate from the whole team's needs and they let us do what we need to do to make us best. I've got full control over the management side of things on that."

*OK, so that's interesting. Paint that picture for me. How does it work? What does it look like?*

"So with me and my goalie coach, we talk about things like after games do you need some time off? Do we need to take the day off and then maybe do a big video session. Or maybe do we go

in the gym and get a light workout in, some activation. Or maybe just do video that day and call it a day. Do you need rest? Get your rest when you can get it. Do you want to go on the ice? Sometimes it's I want to go on the ice but I don't need to see shots that day, I just want to go out with my goalie coach and do some skating and get dialed in and have a good work day without really exhausting the tank at all."

*But sometimes the team is practicing and they need two goalies.*

"And that's why we've always had a third goalie on call if we need it. And now this year, they've added a third goalie."

*Have you had conversations about all of that with other goalies and your philosophies?*

"I've had a couple conversations definitely, but it's not on the goalie to figure that out, it's on the organization to let him figure that out. That's why I'm so grateful where I play ... I've been building it for years. The organization has realized that if you let me be hands on, I'm going to make things work and we have such a good goalie coach that delivers that message as well. So it's on the goalie coach and the coaches to deliver the message like, 'Hey, we're not slacking off here, there's a purpose for everything we do.'"

[https://www.nhl.com/news/top-nhl-prospects-set-for-tournaments-this-weekend?utm\\_source=nhl.com&utm\\_medium=social](https://www.nhl.com/news/top-nhl-prospects-set-for-tournaments-this-weekend?utm_source=nhl.com&utm_medium=social)

### ***Top NHL prospects to be showcased in 10 tournaments across North America Misa of Sharks, Demidov of Canadiens among those to watch***

By Mike G. Morreale

Many potential future stars and potential candidates to challenge for the Calder Trophy as NHL rookie of the year this season will play in NHL prospect tournaments across North America this weekend.

Each will enable players selected in the NHL draft, signed as free agents, or earning tryouts to make an impression prior to the start of training camps next week.

The Buffalo Sabres will host the Prospects Challenge with players from the Boston Bruins, New Jersey Devils, Pittsburgh Penguins and Columbus Blue Jackets at LECOM Harborcenter in Buffalo from Thursday through Monday.

The Colorado Avalanche will host the Rookie Showcase, which includes the Utah Mammoth and Vegas Golden Knights, at South Suburban Sports Complex in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, from Friday through Sunday.

The Next Gen Showcase features the Edmonton Oilers against the Calgary Flames in a two-game series, at Rogers Place in Edmonton on Friday and at Scotiabank Saddledome in Calgary on Sunday.

The Anaheim Ducks will host the Golden State Rookie Faceoff with the Los Angeles Kings and San Jose Sharks at Great Park Ice & FivePoint Arena in Irvine, California, from Friday through Sunday.

The Tom Kurvers Prospect Showcase will include three games featuring top prospects from the Minnesota Wild, Chicago Blackhawks and St. Louis Blues from Friday through Sunday at TRIA Rink at Treasure Island Center in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Tampa Bay Lightning will host the NHL Prospect Tournament, which includes the Carolina Hurricanes, Florida Panthers and Nashville Predators at AdventHealth Center Ice in Wesley Chapel, Florida, from Friday through Monday.

The Prospect Showdown at Bell Centre in Montreal will include the Montreal Canadiens, Toronto Maple Leafs, Ottawa Senators and Winnipeg Jets on Saturday and Sunday.

The Dallas Stars Prospect Games will feature a two-game series between the Stars and Detroit Red Wings at Comerica Center in Frisco, Texas, on Saturday and Sunday.

The NHL Prospects Showcase will feature a two-game set between the Seattle Kraken and Vancouver Canucks at Angel of the Winds Arena in Everett, Washington, on Saturday, and at Kraken Community Iceplex in Seattle on Sunday.

And the Philadelphia Flyers and New York Rangers will play a two-game rookie series at PPL Center in Allentown, Pennsylvania, on Friday and Saturday

Here are 22 prospects to watch from the 10 tournaments:

#### *Prospect Showdown*

Easton Cowan, F, Toronto Maple Leafs: Chosen in the first round (No. 28) of the 2023 draft, the 20-year-old is poised to take the next step in his career and will be given every opportunity during training camp to earn an NHL roster spot. Cowan (6-foot, 185) led the OHL playoffs with 39 points (13 goals, 26 assists) in 17 games, helping London win the league championship, and then was named most valuable player at the Memorial Cup after tying for the tournament lead with seven points (three goals, four assists) in five games to lead London to the championship.

Ivan Demidov, F, Montreal Canadiens: Demidov (6-1, 192), a left-handed shot chosen No. 5 in the 2024 draft, is a dynamic, complete offensive player who has earned comparisons to Tampa Bay Lightning forward Nikita Kucherov. The 19-year-old had 49 points (19 goals, 30 assists) in 65 regular-season games with SKA St. Petersburg (KHL) last season, then joined the Canadiens after signing a three-year, entry-level contract April 8. He had two points (one goal, one assist) in two regular-season games and two assists in five Stanley Cup Playoff games. Demidov demands the puck, thrives on the challenges to generate scoring chances and possesses elite skills and attributes that allow him to quickly execute plays.

*Brayden Yager, F, Winnipeg Jets: Selected by the Penguins with the No. 14 pick in the 2023 draft, the 20-year-old center was acquired by Winnipeg in a trade with Pittsburgh for forward Rutger McGroarty on Aug. 22, 2024 and will play professional hockey full-time this season. Last season he had 82 points (25 goals, 57 assists) in 54 games in the WHL with Moose Jaw and Lethbridge. Yager (5-11, 180) possesses separation speed, great vision and is a game-breaker.*

#### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/09/10/yager-firmly-settled-in-for-next-chapter-of-hockey-journey>

***Yager firmly settled in for next chapter of hockey journey  
Forward looking forward to cut his teeth in the professional ranks this season***

By: Ken Wiebe

Brayden Yager is set to be a sponge.

As the Winnipeg Jets top forward prospect prepares for his second training camp since he was acquired in a deal with the Pittsburgh Penguins for Rutger McGroarty in August 2024, Yager knows that he's going to be cutting his teeth in the professional ranks this season.

At this time last September, Yager had a lot on his plate, as he was getting to know a new organization after dealing with being traded for the first time in his life — before he'd even played a regular-season game for a Penguins team that chose him 14th overall in the 2023 NHL draft.

"Last year, there was a lot going on," said Yager. "This year, you're a lot more comfortable and you're familiar with lots of the young prospects. Going through camp last year, you're familiar with lots of the older guys, too."

"The group that they have are such good people. The players are so easy to talk to and that makes it so easy for a young guy to come in and just hang around — and you'll feel like you belong there."

With Jets prospects hitting the ice on Wednesday afternoon before heading to Montreal to take part in the Prospect Showcase tournament at Bell Centre this weekend that features exhibition games against the host Canadiens and Ottawa Senators, Yager is firmly settled in and ready for the next chapter in his hockey journey.

"It's awesome," said Yager. "Obviously, you look forward to this moment as a young kid and, finally, (when) you're going into the season where you're starting to play pro is pretty cool and I'm ready for it."

Yager is one of the top forward prospects in the Jets' organization and while he's going to be hard-pressed to crack the NHL lineup next month, that's not the mentality he's carrying with him.

As a versatile, two-way forward whose natural position is centre, Yager has the ability to move to the wing if the situation calls for it.

With Jets captain Adam Lowry expected to miss the start of the season as he recovers from hip surgery, there could be an opening down the middle out of camp — depending on what head coach Scott Arniel has in mind in terms of deployment.

"For me, I want to make the NHL. I know the situation of the team," said Yager. "They've got a great team, lots of great players. But I'm 20 years old now and I'm turning pro too, so I've got to fight for a job too. So yeah, that's the goal coming into camp. I want to earn a spot on the team. That's all there really is to say."

Yager recalls watching games as a youngster with his father, who suggested keeping a close eye on the captains of the Penguins and Chicago Blackhawks as two players to model his game after



“For me, it was always Jonathan Toews and Sidney Crosby,” said Yager, noting he met Toews earlier this week. “Just the 200-foot game and the leadership. I’ve been fortunate enough, where I got drafted in Pittsburgh, I got to be around Sid and now I’ve got the chance to be around Jonathan Toews. It’s a pretty cool opportunity and I’ll try to hang around him as much as I can during camp and learn as much as I can, for sure.”

“I want to earn a spot on the team.”

One of the scenes from training camp last fall that stood out was Yager spending a bunch of time with Jets centre Mark Scheifele at the end of an on-ice session, working on the finer details of the craft.

One of the things Yager noticed during the playoff series between the Jets and St. Louis Blues was just how much of the series was played along the boards, citing the importance of winning those battles on the wall.

That’s one of the skills Yager spent a bit more time working on this past summer during his training.

Although he’s put up big offensive numbers at every level he’s played, Yager has always been committed to being strong in the defensive zone, recognizing that earning the trust of the coaching staff is a lot easier when you show that you can play without the puck as well.

“It’s a big part of my game that I take a lot of pride in,” said Yager. “Obviously producing offence but I think it always starts in the D-zone and how you take care of your own zone first and work your way into the fun zone and have some fun.”

Manitoba Moose head coach Mark Morrison will be running the bench this weekend and got a pretty good handle on Yager’s skill set during training camp last season.

“He’s obviously a smart hockey player. He’s got all sorts of skill,” said Morrison. “He’s a good player, there’s no question about it. We’ve seen him on the ice, he controls the puck well and makes great plays. Let’s see how he does at camp.”

Yager is coming off a spectacular season in the Western Hockey League, one which saw him dealt from the Moose Jaw Warriors (where he was team captain) to the Lethbridge Hurricanes, who advanced to the conference final before bowing out to the Medicine Hat Tigers (who captured the league championship).

The Saskatoon product combined for 25 goals and 82 points in 54 WHL games last season before adding eight goals and 14 points in 16 playoff games.

He also suited up for Team Canada for the second time at the World Junior Hockey Championships.

To cap off the season, Yager joined the Jets and was skating with the extra players during the Stanley Cup playoff run.

Part of that meant being in the building for the Jets remarkable rally in Game 7 against the St. Louis Blues, where the Jets scored twice with an extra attacker before Lowry helped his team advance with a double overtime winner.

Seeing Cole Perfetti — a fellow first-round pick — send the game to extra time was something Yager won't soon forget.

"You kind of just soak in the crowd and, I mean, that's got to be the loudest building I've ever heard," said Yager. "The fans were standing the entire overtime and you just look around, you're kind of wide-eyed. (Perfetti) is a great young player and a guy that I kind of want to follow in his footsteps a little bit, you could say.

"Just (with) how he's worked his way up. Obviously he's a great player in the NHL and looking to do pretty big things this year. He's definitely a guy that I can look up to and try to be kind of like him."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/09/10/chibrikov-looking-to-put-his-best-foot-forward>

### ***Chibrikov looking to put his best foot forward***

### ***Winger says recovery after injury with Moose made him stronger physically, mentally***

By: Mike McIntyre

Much as he tried, Nikita Chibrikov couldn't stop seeing the instant replay in his head.

A routine move — one he'd done countless times over his hockey career — had devastating results last January when the young Russian forward caught an edge and tore up his knee during a game with the Manitoba Moose.

"For about three months it was behind my eyes. I always remember this unlucky moment," Chibrikov told the Free Press on Wednesday in a one-on-one chat at the Hockey For All Centre.

Just like that, a promising season — which had included an impactful call-up to the Winnipeg Jets only weeks earlier — was over. Surgery followed, along with an estimated six to nine month recovery process.

"It was a hard injury. And it's hard mentally to come back from," he said.

Fast forward to the present, and Chibrikov is back in town with a clear mind and sharp focus. The 22-year-old winger is determined to pick up where he left off and, hopefully, make it impossible for the Jets to send him back down to the Moose.

"I have the mind to be an NHL player. I believe in myself and will do everything to be on this team," he said.

One step at a time.

First up is this weekend's prospect showdown in Montreal, where several Jets draft picks and a handful of free agents will face the young guns of the Canadiens and Ottawa Senators.

Why is a player with 100 AHL games and four NHL contests on his resumé suiting up alongside all these rookies?

“I made the request to play,” he explained. “I wanted to play some games, since it’s been such a long time. It’s important for me.”

Chibrikov, drafted 50th-overall in 2021, skated on a line with Brayden Yager and Fabian Wagner during Wednesday’s initial team practice.

He received the green light from doctors in early August to ramp up training and resume skating, paving the way for a month-long trip to Florida where he worked out with several Russian pros, including Dmitry Orlov, Andrei Svechnikov and Ilya Mikheyev.

“My body feels fully recovered,” said Chibrikov. “Now I need to feel it in a game. I did a big job to be able to come back and play games. I’m really excited to be on the ice now.”

Moose head coach Mark Morrison, who will guide the group behind the bench this weekend, is thrilled to have a healthy Chibrikov back.

“With those types of injuries, it can take a while to get back, just from the mental part of it. I think these games will be good for him, just to know he’s safe going into a corner, protecting the puck, making a tight turn. It can take a few games before you can get that out of your mind,” said Morrison.

“The one thing that we do know is he put the work in this summer, he’s in tremendous shape, his body looks great, he feels great. I guess we’ll just have to wait and see how it all works out for him, but he has put the work in.”

Chibrikov plays much bigger than his 5-10, 170-pound frame suggests and brings plenty of energy and strong two-way play. He scored his first NHL goal in his big-league debut in April 2024, then added two goals and an assist in four games with the Jets last season.

With Mason Appleton, Brandon Tanev and Rasmus Kupari all moving on from the club this past summer, there are clear job openings in Winnipeg’s forward group when training camp begins next week.

Chibrikov is expected to compete with free agent signings Cole Koepke, Tanner Pearson and Walker Duehr, along with Moose teammates Brad Lambert, Jaret Anderson-Dolan and Parker Ford.

“I had a big conversation after last season with Chevy (GM Kevin Cheveldayoff) and Arny (Jets head coach Scott Arniel) to have a big summer and be ready for training camp,” said Chibrikov.

“I made a big step forward (last year) and my injury stopped me from playing more. Now, I’m focused to make the team and put my best foot forward here.”

Chibrikov believes the ordeal has ultimately made him stronger, both physically and mentally. He recalled how long, lonely days recovering in Winnipeg as the Moose and Jets played on without him tested his resolve — including seeing his roommate, Dmitry Kuzmin, traded in mid-January.

"It was hard. I had the opportunity to go wherever I wanted for the recovery but I took the decision to still be here in Winnipeg," he said.

"I know this happens with hockey players and in other sports. You have to be ready for this. It shows how strong your personality is as a player."

He credited the Moose training staff for going above and beyond, noting they even picked him up from his home when he was on crutches.

"They were hard days with the trainer guys. The first month, we spent around six, seven hours per day together," he said.

Now, he's hoping all that hard work and patience pays off — especially after getting a taste of Winnipeg's hockey fever during the Jets playoff run last spring, which he watched from the sidelines.

"This is a fun city. They really help the team. And I love to be a part of this organization," he said.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/special/sports-editors-picks/2025/09/05/sense-of-enthusiasm-building-as-jets-roll-back-into-town>

***Sense of enthusiasm building as Jets roll back into town  
Schenn, Barron excited for new faces on the roster to make an impact***

By: Ken Wiebe

Although he's only been back in town for a few days, Luke Schenn has a much better sense of the road ahead as he prepares for his first full season with the Winnipeg Jets.

After coming over in a trade with the Nashville Predators at the deadline in March, Schenn was thankful for the opportunity to join a Stanley Cup contender for the stretch run and thrilled with how his new teammates and the organization went out of their way to make him feel welcome.

But learning a new system on the fly and trying to integrate himself into the lineup — with his wife and three kids remaining back in Tennessee — was by his own admission "overwhelming at times."

Now with his family in tow, as he prepares for his 18th NHL season, the veteran defenceman is coming into training camp with ample enthusiasm.

"I've definitely got the itch to get going again," Schenn told reporters on Friday after participating in a captain's skate at Hockey For All Centre. "I've got my family here — which is a huge positive for ourselves and personally. That's a big step. But on top of that, just the familiarity with everyone around here and knowing what the expectations are and how the organization is run. It's more of a seamless transition, rather than being the new guy or the new kid in class."

Schenn was among a small group of NHL players and hopefuls on the ice this week — and that group is expected to grow quickly by early next week.

Although training camp doesn't officially open for just under two weeks, there's a sense of enthusiasm building among the group that survived a hard-hitting series with the St. Louis Blues

and advanced to the second round of the Stanley Cup playoffs against the Dallas Stars to conclude their Presidents' Trophy winning regular season.

"In every off-season, every organization goes through changes and we're no different. You lose a couple of guys in free agency and you gain a couple awesome veteran players who have won Stanley Cups before," said Schenn. "It's going to be great to get everyone back together here. Every year, at this time of year, everyone gets those jitters to kind of get back going again. That positive energy. Everyone has a clean slate and in saying that, we've still got some time here heading into camp. But it's nice to be back in town."

It's been an eventual off-season for the Jets, with the departures of Nikolaj Ehlers, Mason Appleton and Brandon Tanev capturing the attention of the fan base.

"I was probably just as excited as probably every fan here when I saw the signing."

The Jets also brought in a number of new faces, including a pair of Stanley Cup winners in Tanner Pearson (Los Angeles Kings, 2014) and Winnipegger Jonathan Toews (Chicago Blackhawks in 2010, 2013 and 2015).

Schenn and Pearson were teammates during their tenures with the Kings and Vancouver Canucks, while he has plenty of friends around the league that suited up with Toews.

"I was probably just as excited as probably every fan here when I saw the signing," said Schenn. "I played against him lots over the years and got to know him a little bit. It's pretty awesome that he chose to come to Winnipeg and everyone is excited to have him."

Schenn got onto the ice with Toews on Thursday and came away impressed by how he's looking on the comeback trail after two seasons out of the league and dealing with a variety of health challenges.

"He looks incredible. He's still got it, for sure. It's going to be exciting for everyone around here to watch him again," said Schenn, who also answered a question about Toews's winning pedigree. "I don't even know how you put it into words. Just his presence alone. He probably wouldn't even have to say a word the entire year, just his presence, walking around and being here would be enough. But when you've got three (Stanley) Cups and the resumé he has, in terms of being a captain for so long in the league, being a winner, playing for Hockey Canada internationally.

"You name it, he's got the resumé you dream of as a kid for sure. For him to come back, with everything he's gone through personally and to give it a go in his hometown here, it's going to be such a positive for every player in this room and the organization and just the city of Winnipeg as a whole."

Schenn is also familiar with veteran forward Gustav Nyquist from their time together with the Predators for parts of two seasons.

Toews's joy and enthusiasm were on display earlier this week as he buzzed around the ice during the informal sessions, high-fiving members of the Jets and Manitoba Moose at each and every turn.

It seems abundantly clear that Toews has put in a lot of work to get himself ready for the task ahead and that he's going to enjoy the journey, which is something he pointed out during his press conference back in July.

Jets forward Morgan Barron also made his way back into Winnipeg this week and, while he hasn't been on the ice with Toews yet, he's heard plenty about the competitive spirit of the veteran and how he conducts himself on and off the ice.

"The first thing that pops off to me is his attitude," Barron, who signed a two-year extension during the off-season, told reporters. "Someone like that who's won so much at every level, you hear the stories about him and his personality and what he's going to bring to the rink."

"Obviously happy for a guy like that. He's had a long journey to get back to the point where he feels ready to play. I'm really excited to kind of get to know him and learn from him."

As he prepares for his fourth full season with the Jets, Barron is also excited about what is on the horizon for a core group that is determined to take the next step.

"It's always fun when you're winning. That makes everybody's life easier coming to the rink," said Barron.

"Obviously, there are changes. There always are, but I think it's exciting to get some new faces in here, guys who will definitely make an impact. And, yeah, just trying to replicate that start we had last year."

### **ESPN.com**

[https://www.espn.com/nfl/story/\\_/id/46208951/jonathan-toews-return-great-story-nhl](https://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/46208951/jonathan-toews-return-great-story-nhl)

### ***Patrick Kane: Jonathan Toews' return a 'great story' for NHL***

BY Greg Wyshynski

LAS VEGAS -- Patrick Kane believes the comeback of Jonathan Toews, his friend and former Chicago Blackhawks teammate, could be one of the best stories in the NHL season.

Toews, 37, hasn't played in the NHL since his final game in April 2023 with the Blackhawks, who chose not to re-sign him. Toews was limited during his final two seasons in Chicago, dealing with the effects of chronic inflammatory response syndrome and a bout with COVID-19. He signed a one-year deal with the Winnipeg Jets in July, mounting an NHL comeback with his hometown team.

Kane and Toews won three Stanley Cups as teammates with the Blackhawks. Toews captained that team for 14 seasons.

"I think it's awesome. Obviously with what he's been through, to be able to put himself in a position to come back and be feeling good, I think that's the most important thing," Kane told ESPN on Tuesday. "It could be really a great story for the NHL and for the franchise and for him and his family. So I'm excited about watching him."

Toews stepped away from hockey after the Blackhawks declined to re-sign him. He said he was "not fully retiring" but would give himself "the time and space to fully heal and enjoy life to the fullest once again."

In November 2024, Toews posted to social media about a five-week "healing journey" he took in India in which he said he was "happy to say things are trending" after an Ayurvedic detox.

"It's been almost 5 years of searching for a way to heal the inflammatory and immune system issues that took me out of hockey," Toews said on Instagram.

Kane, entering his third season with the Detroit Red Wings, said Toews has stayed in touch with him during his former teammate's time away from the NHL.

"We talk quite a bit. He came to Chicago about a month ago, so I was able to see him there. Even obviously with him not playing the last couple of years, he's been great -- just keeping in touch and reaching out after a game every now and then. Always nice to hear from him," he said.

Kane also left the Blackhawks in 2023 when Chicago traded him to the New York Rangers.

"It's funny how your paths kind of change, right? You're seeing each other every day for 17 years and then all of a sudden, you kind of go your separate ways," he said. "I felt that way about some of my other teammates too, like Brent Seabrook and Duncan Keith and Patrick Sharp. These are your best friends. All of a sudden they retire or they go to a different team and you don't see them as much. It's kind of wild."

With Toews potentially finishing his career in his hometown, there's always been speculation that Kane could do the same, having grown up in Buffalo.

Is that something he'd consider?

"You know what? I feel like I've been pretty fortunate with the franchises that I've played for. Chicago. New York was a great experience, even though it didn't work as well as I'd hoped. Now, Detroit," Kane said. "I mean, I've really, really enjoyed my time there. It's been a great place to kind of revive my career and play in a good situation and be on a team that's on the rise."

### **Sportsnet.ca**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/i-cherished-it-how-jets-hellebuyck-enjoyed-summer-as-hart-winner/>

### ***'I cherished it': How Jets' Hellebuyck enjoyed summer as Hart winner (VIDEO)***

Winnipeg Jets goalie and reigning Hart Trophy winner Connor Hellebuyck joins Sean Reynolds to discuss how he enjoyed his MVP summer, what Jonathan Toews adds to the Jets, and more.

### **The Athletic**

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6602284/2025/09/08/winnipeg-jets-prospect-timelines-sascha-boumedienne/>

## ***Jets prospect timelines: When will top players in Winnipeg's system make an NHL impact?***

By Murat Ates

Winnipeg's NHL roster is a President's Trophy-winning, veteran-heavy group with playoff demons to slay. Its top prospects — Elias Salomonsson, Sascha Boumedienne, Brayden Yager, Brad Lambert and more — will be in tough positions to win NHL jobs at training camp.

However, general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff spoke about the NHL opportunities during his offseason media availability. Lambert has the blazing speed of a top-six forward — like Nikolaj Ehlers, whose offseason departure creates a hole in Winnipeg's top six — while Salomonsson dominated in his best AHL games last season.

Is there a chance these top prospects could make Winnipeg's roster this year? When will each of Winnipeg's prospects be ready for the NHL — and, when they do make it, what can we expect from their NHL careers? (Also important: When will the Jets roster be able to accommodate them?)

We'll try to answer those questions about Winnipeg's top prospects today. Many of them are practising this week ahead of the Prospect Showdown in Montreal this weekend. What can we expect from their careers?

Before getting started: The idea of “estimated arrival” refers to when I'd expect a player to play their next several NHL games. There could be some ups and downs before they become permanent fixtures on the Jets roster — and some players won't make it that far. Second, the long-term projection is what kind of role and impact the player will ultimately have in Winnipeg — not the role they'll have right when they get called up. Finally, my projections are meant as broad expectation setters and not a hard ceiling or floor for each player.

*Sascha Boumedienne, 18, LHD, Boston University (NCAA)*  
*Long-term projection: Second-pairing defenceman*  
*Estimated arrival: 2028-29*

Sascha Boumedienne has a history of outperforming expectations. At 17 years old, he was the youngest player in men's Division I NCAA hockey for much of last season and the youngest defenceman throughout it. He responded to the learning curve by establishing himself as a top-four defenceman in the second half of the season and elevating his game at the Frozen Four. Boumedienne pulled off the same trick at 16 years old in the USHL the previous season, struggling early and developing into a cornerstone player by the end of the season.

I start with this context to explain (and to debate) his timeline. I'm expecting Boumedienne to play two more seasons in college and need at least one season of AHL hockey, thereby entering the NHL equation in 2028-29. It's a development path that would mirror Dylan Samberg's NHL arrival — three years in college, one full season in the AHL and then a partial AHL/NHL season — and it's a reasonable path for the fleet-footed Boumedienne.

But this season will be the first time in ages that Boumedienne, now 18, starts on a level playing field with his peers. Boumedienne could theoretically depart college after two seasons and sign in the AHL at just 19 years old, betting on himself early — again. He's a gifted skater who's put a



lot of work into his edges, moving nimbly in all directions. He also excels at puck retrievals and, despite needing to get stronger, he's well on his way to NHL size: Boston lists him at 6-foot-2, 183 pounds.

I still think caution is the safer bet. If all goes well, Boumedienne will cement himself as a big minutes defenceman for Boston University this season and dominate college next year. The AHL promises its own learning curve in 2027-28; clear that hurdle, and Boumedienne could make his NHL debut in 2028-29 — the year after Samberg, Josh Morrissey and Dylan DeMelo's current contracts come to an end.

*Brayden Yager, 20, C, Manitoba Moose (AHL)*

*Long-term projection: Middle six centre*

*Estimated arrival: 2026-27*

Winnipeg has a few top prospects with significant boom/bust potential. Brayden Yager appears to be the opposite of that — a centreman whose all-around game should be enough to win NHL minutes even if his offence wavers at the pro level. That's not to say Yager lacks offensive ability; he's a smart, creative playmaker with the puck on his stick and carries a heavy shot. (He scored 28 goals in 56 playoff games as a WHL player.) He should be capable of playing a top-six AHL role this season and, if he can excel in that role, there's a chance Yager's ceiling looks more like that of a second-line centre than the 3C I'm projecting now.

The good news is that he's a mature, responsible player with the work ethic and obsession with self-improvement that he's a good bet to help Winnipeg win hockey games even if he "only" tops out as a third-line centre. There's enough dimension to Yager's game that I'm projecting one full-time AHL season, with a transition to NHL minutes as soon as 2026-27.

*Elias Salomonsson, 21, RHD, Manitoba Moose (AHL)*

*Long-term projection: Second-pairing defenceman*

*Estimated arrival: 2026-27*

Elias Salomonsson's best-case scenario could see the 6-foot-2 right-shot defenceman approach — or even eclipse — Dylan Samberg's level of NHL quality. Salomonsson's best AHL games are dominant — a feat Salomonsson has accomplished even younger than Samberg did when he came out of college.

It's difficult to name the one aspect of Salomonsson's game that will emerge as dominant in the NHL, though. He's a mobile, all-around defenceman who can win battles in tough spots and then get the puck moving north. He skates well, shoots hard and drives enough AHL offence such that he posted 27 points in 53 games last season. That's stunning stuff on a Moose team that struggled to generate offence. I'm not sure I see Salomonsson playing a big role on an NHL power play or becoming an utterly dominant shutdown defender, but he works so hard and reads the game well enough that he'll find his way as a top-four defenceman all the same.

There is even a world in which Winnipeg's best play is to forget about its surplus of veteran defencemen, giving Salomonsson third-pairing minutes as soon as this season. I don't think the Jets are interested in that. Salomonsson is waivers exempt this season and next; I don't think Winnipeg is going to trip over itself to force Salomonsson into the NHL in a hurry.

I think he'll force his way onto the Jets next season, though, and cement himself as an NHL regular the year after that. If he can force the issue even sooner, Salomonsson's odds of a top-pairing NHL peak would seem to soar.

*Colby Barlow, 20, LW, Manitoba Moose (AHL)*

*Long-term projection: Middle six winger*

*Estimated arrival: 2027-28*

Colby Barlow's task towards carving out a long NHL career will be to prove that he's not a one-dimensional player — or to become so unbelievably good at goal scoring that the other holes in his game don't hold him back. Barlow's one-timer is exceptional: powerful, accurate, capable of beating professional goaltenders. His skating and puck skills were good at the OHL level, but don't project to dominate an NHL game. His work ethic is good. Barlow is a competitive, hardworking player and demonstrated plenty of resolve, turning a poor start to last season into a dominant playoff push.

There are concerns about his pace and defensive impact translating to a top-six NHL role, and I'm guessing Lambert and Yager beat him to the NHL. That said, Barlow did well to find his game at crunch time last season and is ideally ready to take that momentum to the AHL. He will likely receive a top-six opportunity this season, and his one-timer could play a major role on Manitoba's top power play.

*Brad Lambert, 21, C/RW, Manitoba Moose (AHL)*

*Long-term projection: Middle six forward*

*Estimated arrival: 2026-27*

Brad Lambert should play NHL games this season, but he's in a tough spot, given the number of veteran forwards Winnipeg signed this summer. He's also past the age where players who eventually become top-six forwards in the NHL usually earn big-league playing time. Cole Perfetti played 50 games the season he turned 21, Jack Roslovic played half a season in the NHL, and Kyle Connor scored 31 goals for Winnipeg at the same age. Nikolaj Ehlers, who Lambert might hope to replace with his speed, turned 21 in February of his second full season in the NHL, scoring 25 goals and 39 assists.

Lambert turns 22 in December and scored seven goals and 28 assists on a Moose team that struggled to generate offence last season. The Jets recognized that problem — they've signed a slew of AHL impact players this season — but I tend to think that a player as fast and talented as he is should be able to get into dangerous areas in the AHL without that kind of cavalry. I believe he's capable of re-establishing himself as a top-six prospect this season, but it's important to acknowledge the urgency. Whatever league he plays in, this is a crucial season for Lambert's development.

*Nikita Chibrikov, 22, RW*

*Long-term projection: Bottom six forward*

*Estimated arrival: 2026-27*

Nikita Chibrikov is a tenacious left-shooting winger who plays predominantly on the right wing. He has a powerful wrist shot and good puck skills, showing creativity in addition to grit. He's also a good bet to win his board battles in the name of getting a zone exit or keeping the puck under control in the offensive zone. He's not a burner in terms of top speed, but can beat defencemen with changes of direction and pace. Outside of raw speed, the biggest knock on

Chibrikov is his size: He's listed at 5-foot-11, 193 pounds on the Manitoba Moose roster. He'll need to prove he can be as pesky and effective outside of his offensive production to establish himself as a full-time NHL player.

I think Chibrikov will play games in the NHL this season, just as he's done in each of the past two seasons, but don't anticipate his full-time NHL arrival until 2026-27. He'll lose his waivers exemption next season and should have the chops to win a roster spot on merit next season. Tanner Pearson and Cole Koepke stand in his way now, among more established veterans, but they're each on one-year deals. The Jets also have Kyle Connor, Adam Lowry, Gustav Nyquist and Jonathan Toews as pending unrestricted free agents in their forward group. If even one of those players moves on, 2026-27 will provide more opportunities than exists today.

#### *Honourable mentions*

*Kieron Walton*, 19, was brilliant in the OHL last season, doubling his point production and making the Jets look good for drafting him 187th in 2024. The 6-foot-6 centre who studies Tage Thompson YouTube videos in his spare time could be a dominant junior hockey player this season. His professional route likely involves one more OHL season and multiple AHL seasons after it, unless he surprises us all over again.

*Kevin He's* post-draft season was special in its own right, where he scored 75 points in 62 games and emerged as a leader for the Niagara IceDogs. He is less physically imposing than Walton but makes himself a pain for his opponents through an in-your-face playing style. *Alfons Freij* is a mobile defenceman with enough puck skill to impress, but whose decision-making needs improvement before being considered an NHL player.

*Tyrel Bauer* comes without that puck skill, but is so physically imposing that he may yet earn an NHL look. *Viktor Klingsell*, *Zach Nehring* and *Jacob Julien* have long-term potential. The Jets hold 21-year-old collegiate defenceman *Garrett Brown* in high regard.

I also value goaltenders *Dom DiVincentiis* and *Thomas Milic*, who should benefit from an improved Moose roster this season. DiVincentiis (.906) posted Manitoba's best save percentage last year, followed by Kaapo Kahkonen, Milic and Chris Driedger. Kahkonen and Driedger have over 200 NHL games between them, offering hope for DiVincentiis and Milic even in a down year. The caveat, of course, is that Connor Hellebuyck isn't likely to cede NHL playing time any time soon.