

Winnipegjets.com

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/blog-huge-opportunity-for-perfetti>

BLOG: Huge opportunity for Perfetti

Perfetti: "It's exciting to play with guys that have done so much in their career"

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – When Scott Arniel was putting together his line combinations before training camp, it was a natural fit for him to put his newest centre Jonathan Toews, with Cole Perfetti and another new face, Gustav Nyquist.

“With Jonathan and his experience, and the type of player that he is, we wanted to put him with some real good skill and with Perfetti and Nyquist, that is what they are there,” said Arniel.

Perfetti had a great year for us last year and we need for him to continue to build, but I also needed with Adam (Lowry) being out, kind of looked at with that next line with Vladdy (Namestnikov) being in that kind of role.”

Nyquist had a tough year last season along with everyone else in Nashville, but the great news is that he had 75 points (23G, 52A) with the Predators in 2023-24. When asked about the chance to play with Toews, he could not hide his excitement.

“The guy has been such a tremendous player for such a long time in the league,” said Nyquist.

“It is great to see that he is back in the game and doing the thing that he loves. It is exciting to play with him.”

Nyquist is quite comfortable with the Central Division after playing for both the Predators and Wild, two huge rivals of the Jets. The Swedish forward touched on why he decided on the Jets during free agency.

“Look at this team and what they have done over the last few years. I still feel young out there, but I obviously haven’t won it yet and the chances are getting less and less,” said Nyquist.

“So, to come here and have a chance to play on a good team and hopefully do something special here, that was the main thing that stuck out.”

Perfetti is coming off a breakout season with the Jets with 50 points (18G, 32A) and now has the pleasure of lining up with a couple of grizzled veterans.

"It's cool. It's nice to play with two guys that have been around for a long time, doing it at a high level, for a really long time," said Perfetti.

"And it's exciting to play with guys that have done so much in their career and can learn a lot from these guys and both great guys off the ice. So, it's been a real treat for the first couple days here."

Last season, Perfetti had meshed well with Nikolaj Ehlers and Namestnikov. Now with the departure of Ehlers, it might open the door for the 23-year-old on the Jets top power play unit as well as put more pressure to produce in the absence of Ehlers.

"Obviously, losing Nikky, it hurts. Everyone's got to take another step in the right direction and level up their game and that is exactly what my mindset was all summer. There's going to be a hole to fill there and no one's going to be able to fill exactly what Nikky did by themselves because he was a great player and what he could do was special," said Perfetti.

"As a line, for us, we're focused on being the best second line and going out there and working together. For me personally, yeah, there's a hole to fill and I'm aware of that. I know that it's big shoes to fill but I'm ready to try to fill that task and evolve my game and take the confidence from last year."

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/09/20/winnipeg-jets-fan-support-like-none-other>

Winnipeg Jets fan support 'like none other' Turnout for training camp scrimmage makes players feel like kids in a candy store

By: Mike McIntyre

It was a vivid — and very noisy — reminder of just how hockey-crazed this community can be.

A dreary, rainy Saturday didn't stop roughly 5,000 fans from packing into Hockey For All Centre to watch the Winnipeg Jets go through their training camp paces.

"It's awesome. It just shows how great the support is, how great the community is," said rookie skater Colby Barlow.

The 20-year-old from Ontario, selected 18th overall by the Jets in 2023, drew one of the loudest ovations when he buried a wicked one-timer off a Parker Ford feed to open the scoring during a scrimmage, which was the main attraction of the team's annual Fan Fest.

It wasn't just the newcomers soaking in the atmosphere. Even seasoned veterans like Vlad Namestnikov looked like kids in a candy store as they took in the rock-star entrance through a jam-packed mezzanine.

"The support we get here is like none other. It's great to see the fans again, to sign some autographs, to communicate with the kids. It was a good day," said the 32-year-old, who is about to start his 13th NHL season and fourth in Winnipeg.

The Russian-born, Detroit-raised forward recalled being one of those youngsters himself, tagging along to Red Wings camps as a kid.

Nobody, though, drew a bigger response than Connor Hellebuyck. Chants of "MVP" rained down on the reigning Hart and Vezina Trophy winner as he made his way to the ice. Right behind him was hometown hero Jonathan Toews, who showed plenty of jump during the 50-minute scrimmage, played in two 25-minute halves.

Team Blue prevailed 5-4 in a shootout, with Danny Zhilkin beating Hellebuyck for the winner. Kyle Connor, Mason Shaw, Nino Niederreiter and Gabe Vilardi — the last with the goalie pulled in the final minute — scored for the losing side.

Barlow, Cole Koepke, Jaret Anderson-Dolan and Brad Lambert had the goals for victorious Team White, which also featured Toews skating alongside new wingers Cole Perfetti and Gustav Nyquist.

"The buzz around here, it seems like the last couple years, I haven't experienced anything like that," said Jets coach Scott Arniel, who watched the game from the stands along with team management, co-owner Mark Chipman and injured captain Adam Lowry.

"Everybody was a kid one time. And you looked up to your heroes. That's what all these kids get to do here and if we're creating new fans for right now or the future, or maybe creating young hockey players that are going to be playing one day in the NHL, it's just great to have them all here with their family enjoying all of the different parts of fan fest."

Veteran defenceman Luke Schenn, acquired at last year's trade deadline, lingered nearly 30 minutes after the scrimmage to sign autographs and pose for photos, the last player to leave the ice at his first Jets camp.

"That's a memory for some of these kids that lasts a lifetime," said Arniel.

"Not too often during the course of the year do they get that close to their players and to see their heroes and see guys like that. It's pretty exciting."

After two intense days of drills, the scrimmage offered players a chance to loosen up — though Schenn set an early tone with a couple of big hits on teammates temporarily wearing the opposition's colours.

"That's the competitive side. There was some chirping going on before the game started," said Arniel.

The intensity will crank up another notch Sunday when the Minnesota Wild come to town for the first of six preseason games. Puck drop is 4 p.m. at Canada Life Centre, with plenty of prospects expected to dress for both clubs.

"Last year didn't end the way we wanted it to and it left that taste in our mouth," Namestnikov said of winning the Presidents' Trophy as top regular-season team, only to be eliminated in the second round of the playoffs. The result is a raised bar on internal expectations for camp this year.

"Everyone has one goal here — to win the Cup. We didn't achieve that last year. Throughout this camp, we haven't been afraid to talk about winning the Cup. We have to take the next step to get there."

Namestnikov is expected to start the season centering the third line with Niederreiter and Alex Iafallo, while his previous role as second-line centre now belongs to Toews.

"Wherever I am in the lineup, I'll go out and do my best," said Namestnikov, who actually stole the puck from Toews to eventually set up Niederreiter's goal. "It takes a few practices to get the chemistry back, but I thought today we took a step in the right direction and made some plays out there."

Toews won't make his preseason debut Sunday — Arniel said that should come Tuesday against the Edmonton Oilers at the downtown rink — but he's already making an impression.

"I always talk to our veterans and get a little layout of 'How many do you want to play?' We have some guys that only want to play two. We have other guys that want to play three. I have one guy that wants to play six. I've already told him he's not playing six and you probably know who that is," said Arniel.

That would be Toews, back in the league after a two-year health-related hiatus.

"We want him to play 82 (regular-season) games, but at the end of the day he's building towards Game 1," said Arniel.

"We're just trying, each day, to help him get confidence — not that he needs it — but just get feeling good about how he's playing, recognizing how we play, the system and structure and that stuff. And that's all coming. I even saw it, detail stuff out there today that maybe last week we had just shown to him that he's picking up already."

The famously intense “Captain Serious” even showed some fire on Saturday, slamming his stick and muttering a few choice words after losing control of the puck.

“He’s such a great individual, so driven and so determined. And he’s just a sponge right now,” said Arniel.

For Barlow, who was only two years old when Toews broke into the NHL in 2007, the experience is invaluable.

“The career he’s had, continuing here, it’s pretty cool,” he said.

“His leadership is super helpful. He’s been talking to everybody out there, giving (stick) taps. He’s been great. A guy I’m watching and trying to pick things up from. He’s got that presence and is a guy you want to learn from.”

Winnipeg Sun

https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-mark-scheifele-is-happy-there-is-no-more-fitness-testing-permitted-until-2030?utm_source=winnipeg-jets

Jets' Mark Scheifele is happy there is 'no more fitness testing' permitted until 2030

By Gordon Anderson

How about one more beep test time for old time’s sake.

“We had one last shot at them, so we really went hard at them this year,” Jets head coach Scott Arniel said about the final training camp fitness test.

League-wide fitness assessments, once considered a staple activity at NHL training camps, is no longer permitted due to a change in the league’s collective bargaining agreement, ratified by the NHL and NHLPA back in July.

“I’m actually very happy there’s no more fitness testing,” Jets forward Mark Scheifele said. “Camp is a little shorter, less preseason games, so I think the PA did an awesome job with the NHL getting that new CBA done, and obviously we just want to continue to grow this game and make so many people see how amazing this game is and grow it to the level that we believe it’s at.”

The four-year deal between the parties takes effect on Sept. 16 of next year.

Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff recalled the cavalier attitude some players from decades ago had towards off-season conditioning.

"I remember my training camps with the Islanders, and when you walked into the dressing room it was like, 'Wow these guys are serious. They have got a bike,'" Cheveldayoff said. "It is interesting how things have evolved."

Cheveldayoff was selected 16th overall by the Islanders in the 1988 entry draft.

"The players today, they're athletes 12 months of the year," Arniel said. "They're not coming to camp to get into shape. So, I'm hoping that continues."

Scheifele says the elimination of fitness testing won't affect the off-season habits of the players.

"Nowadays, it's so much about training, it's so much about being on the ice in the summer and coming into camp being kind of at your peak," he said. "So, I can't see guys now just slacking all summer because there's no fitness testing. I always say, once you get on the ice for the first practice you can kind of see who's struggling a little bit or who's not."

Teammate Kyle Connor agreed,

"Whether there's testing or not, it's not going to change guys' motivation coming in to try and be the best player that they can be," Connor said. "I don't think there's really going to be much of a huge difference."

The Jets leading scorer in the regular season went on to say that injury concerns were a consideration in having the testing removed.

"The only thing I'd really say is, in our minds, it takes away completely the chance of getting an injury in one of those situations," Connor said.

The duration of training camps will be reduced from 21 days to 13 days. Exhibition games will also be reduced from a maximum of eight to a maximum of four. Players with 100 or more NHL games experience can only play a maximum of two pre-season games.

The head coach did take minor issue with some of the player-led initiatives in the agreement.

"Training camp is about getting your structure and your systems in place, your personnel, figuring out who they are, but the biggest thing, the conditioning gets you up into high gear," Arniel said. "We can't try to get in shape as the season starts. We don't have the time. We don't have the practice time. I'm hoping that next year, it's the same mentality that you come into camp."

The coach believes last season's training camp set the stage for the team's ferocious start, on the way to the franchise's first Presidents' Trophy as the regular season

champ. The Jets opened with an eight-game win streak. The club won 15 of 16 games before losing games to Tampa and Florida in mid-November.

Jets' Nyquist sees Winnipeg as chance to chase elusive Stanley Cup

"Just look at what we did last year coming out of the gate," Arniel said. "We eliminated teams in the first month and a half and because of that great start, because of that I felt our team was in great shape."

Cheveldayoff says another benefit in testing is setting base performance levels for injured players on the mend. For the record, the team's GM is OK with the removal of fitness testing as a conditioning tool.

"I think fitness testing has been misconstrued a little bit," Cheveldayoff said. "The benefits of fitness testing can be having base levels in coming back from injuries and stuff like that. Those are going to be things where, as an organization, you want to put the players in the best situation to succeed in coming back off injuries and stuff like that. The medical staff, the training staff, they're going to have to figure out how to measure the power in the hip flexor, so that when a guy is coming back, you know that."

City TV

<https://winnipeg.citynews.ca/video/2025/09/20/thousands-flock-to-winnipeg-jets-fan-fest/>

Thousands flock to Winnipeg Jets Fan Fest (VIDEO)

The Hockey for All Centre was packed on Saturday for the Jets Fan fest, giving and fans an up close and personal chance to watch their heroes prep for the upcoming season. Eddie Huband reports.