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BLOG: Morrissey day-to-day after hit from Saturday night Morrissey has 30 points (6G, 24 A) in 36 games this season

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – After a disappointing loss to the Minnesota Wild on Saturday night, the Winnipeg Jets were back on the ice at Canada Life Centre on Sunday afternoon.

There was one noticeable absence as Josh Morrissey was not with his teammates for practice. The Jets defenceman took a questionable cross check from behind by the Wild's Joel Eriksson Ek, there was no call on the play and Scott Arniel was visibly frustrated after the game.

Arniel said after practice that Morrissey will be day-to-day.

Dylan DeMelo was penalized not long after the hit on Morrissey for cross checking Eriksson Ek in front of the Jets net. Minnesota scored on that power play tying the game late in the third and eventually won the game in overtime. The 32-year-old was surprised that there was no call on Eriksson Ek.

“Yeah. Very much so. For sure. I don’t really have any other comment other than I was surprised by it,” said DeMelo.

“If you want a better answer, maybe the ref would probably have to answer that one.”

Despite the result, the Jets showed up with a solid effort in a huge divisional clash and another game that they can build off of.

“I think I mentioned the other day that consistency, individually and as a team, doing it shift after shift, period after period. I thought we did that for most of that game. And against a real good especially offensive team like Minny,” said Arniel.

“In our stats, we kept them down to seven, five-on-five chances. That’s the type of win we had against Washington. It was the game we had against Dallas. When we do those things, we’re a heck of a lot better team and we give ourselves a chance to win hockey games.”

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/28/jets-still-starving-for-results>

Jets still starving for results

Despite solid improvements against the Wild, win still elusive after ‘questionable’ last-minute call

By: Ken Wiebe

Dylan DeMelo knows it’s a fine line and he did his best to straddle it.

The Winnipeg Jets defenceman was smack dab in the middle of a controversial sequence of events in the final minute of Saturday's 4-3 overtime loss to the Minnesota Wild.

DeMelo was on the ice when his defence partner, Josh Morrissey, was taken into the boards from behind by Wild centre Joel Eriksson Ek — when Morrissey didn't have the puck.

Once things settled down on the same shift, DeMelo found Eriksson Ek in front and knocked him to the ice, leading officials to assess a cross-checking minor on the play.

DeMelo coming to the aid of a teammate is something to be encouraged and often applauded, though in this case, it had consequences attached to it as well.

Not only were the Wild able to score the equalizer during DeMelo's penalty, they secured the bonus point in overtime in a game where the Jets really needed a clean two themselves.

"It stinks," said DeMelo, answering a question about the helpless feeling of being in the sin bin when the Wild cashed in during the six-on-four power play.

DeMelo did his best to describe his point of view of the play in question, explaining that it was not a full cross-check but more of a push with his left hand on the shoulder of Eriksson Ek.

And while DeMelo didn't come out and say the word dive, if you read between the lines, it was apparent he thought the sturdy Swedish pivot went down easier than usual.

"A little bit," DeMelo offered.

When you look at the replay from the back camera angle, you can clearly see where DeMelo is coming from.

"Honestly, to me it looked like I gave him more of a push than a cross check."

But the issue is that the officials don't get all of those angles in real time and they don't get access to the numerous slow-motion replays that were circulating on social media.

Which is part of the reason DeMelo showed accountability for his transgression, even if you could tell that he didn't agree with the call.

"Although I don't think I hit him very hard. I've definitely done a lot worse," said DeMelo.

"Honestly, to me it looked like I gave him more of a push than a cross check. I know it was kind of cross-checking motion, but it was more my left hand."

"Regardless, I don't think I should put myself in that position. So I'll take ownership for my actions in that regard."

Jets head coach Scott Arniel was livid about the call in the corner that wasn't made on Eriksson Ek for his hit on Morrissey, fully expressing his frustration during his post-game comments at the podium.

On Sunday, Arniel explained that Morrissey got banged up on the play and while he took a shift in overtime, he is officially listed as day-to-day as a result of the hit from Eriksson Ek.

"That had a lot to do with my anger," said Arniel. "(Morrissey) was just sore when he woke up (Sunday) morning."

Arniel believes that star players in the NHL need to be protected and this was an instance where that didn't happen.

"It was a very, very questionable call that we felt, with us in a one-goal game with a minute to go, that was something that didn't have to be done."

That DeMelo was whistled for a questionable call moments later merely heightened his frustration, though Arniel stopped short of unloading with both barrels a day later.

"I'm not going down that road. It was just very questionable," said Arniel. "It was a very, very questionable call that we felt, with us in a one-goal game with a minute to go, that was something that didn't have to be done."

The Jets, who have dropped five consecutive games (0-2-3), face the Edmonton Oilers on Monday night at Canada Life Centre before heading out for a three-game road trip against Eastern Conference opponents.

Arniel also provided some context for why he chose to send Morgan Barron over the boards to take the defensive zone faceoff as the Jets were tasked with defending against the six-on-four advantage.

Since Jonathan Toews finished the game 10-of-13 in the dot and won a critical offensive-zone draw that led to Mark Scheifele's goal with 2.1 seconds to go in the second period, some observers wondered why he wasn't given the assignment in the defensive zone.

Arniel explained that his primary choices in this scenario were Barron and Scheifele and part of that had to do with the side of the ice the draw was taken, plus Barron and Alex Iafallo were the two penalty-killing forwards he wanted to use in that situation.

"(Barron is) pretty good at it, too. That's why he's been taking them," said Arniel. "(Barron) had already won a couple on our PK and that was more of the reasoning with it. Him and (Iafallo) were starting all of our PK's. They were the first two guys that go over the boards. We've been running with that for the last couple of games and it's been having success, so that was more of the idea behind it."

Eriksson Ek ended up winning the draw for the Wild and Barron was left at a disadvantage when his stick broke after he blocked a shot from Quinn Hughes, making defending a bit more of a challenge in what essentially became a six-on-three-and-a-half (rather than a six-on-four).

Arniel and DeMelo were both quick to point out that there were a lot of things the Jets liked about Saturday's effort in the first game coming out of the holiday break.

Carrying those over while finding a way to change the final result is part of the latest challenge against an Oilers team that lost to the Calgary Flames on Saturday but have clearly been rounding into form after a sleepy start to the campaign.

"Probably 59 minutes of real good hockey," said Arniel, noting that the Jets statistics showed them limiting the Wild to seven five-on-five scoring chances in the contest. "That's the type of

win we had against Washington. It was the game we had against Dallas. When we do those things, we're a heck of a lot better team and we give ourselves a chance to win hockey games."

"It's not easy when you're losing games and you're feeling like you're playing winning hockey. And I'm sure everyone in this locker room feels like that."

Yet those wins have too been too few and too far in between for the Jets, who have just six wins during the past 24 games and slipped to 15-17-4 overall — which leaves them within striking distance of the second wild card spot in the Western Conference standings with 46 games left to go.

One of the encouraging things for the Jets is that goalie Connor Hellebuyck has shown no signs of anything physically bothering him while making six consecutive starts since coming back from arthroscopic knee surgery.

Hellebuyck could push that consecutive starts number as high as eight before backup Eric Comrie is likely between the pipes against the Toronto Maple Leafs on Jan. 1.

"I felt like I jumped right back in my game and picked up where I left off," said Hellebuyck, noting he caught some pickerel on Lake Winnipeg that were part of the holiday meals that he enjoyed. "It's not easy when you're losing games and you're feeling like you're playing winning hockey. And I'm sure everyone in this locker room feels like that."

"All I can do is put my best foot forward and continue to build my game every single night and let the results just kind of fall into place. I'm just going to make sure I'm fine tuning every one of my details, and I'm making as (few) mistakes as I possibly can."

ON THE MOVE: Jets forward prospect Kevin He was involved in a big Ontario Hockey League trade on Sunday, as he was dealt by the Niagara Ice Dogs to the Flint Thunderbirds.

He, who was chosen by the Jets in the fourth round (109th overall) of the 2024 NHL Draft, had 14 goals and 31 points in 28 games with the Ice Dogs this season.

Going into Sunday's action, the Thunderbirds have a record of 24-7-2-2, which leaves them alone in top spot of the Western Conference of the OHL, so He is going to a strong team and could be involved in a playoff push during his fourth full junior season.

Winnipeg Sun

https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/a-humbling-game-jets-cole-perfetti-keeps-stiff-upper-lip/article_e2b9eced-d49d-4398-87b1-915a800bc1a9.html

'A humbling game': Jets' Cole Perfetti keeps stiff upper lip

By Paul Friesen

This isn't how it was supposed to go for Cole Perfetti this season.

The Winnipeg Jets forward's production has plummeted and his ice time is going down with it, far from the budding contributor he seemed to be turning into a year ago.

Little wonder he put in some extra time on the ice after Sunday's practice.

"It's not what you want," Perfetti said when he finally got to his dressing-room stall. "But it's stuff you have to deal with as a player. You've just got to manage it and dig your way out of it, get to the other side. Claw your way out of it and get back to being the player you can be."

We saw what he could be when he scored 18 goals and a career-high 50 points last season, entrenching himself on the second line.

He capped that off with three goals in the playoffs, including the unforgettable buzzer-beater that forced overtime and allowed the Jets to win Game 7 of the first round against St. Louis.

Back then it wasn't unusual for Perfetti to get around 15:00 of ice time per game.

That often increased to 16 or 17 minutes earlier this season.

The last four games he's averaged closer to 10, hitting a low of 8:37 when he was stapled to the bench for the third period in Colorado 10 days ago.

"You never want to get sat," he said. "It was obviously a bummer. It's a humbling game, that's for sure. You think you've got it figured out and it'll take a bite out of you. I mean, it's the top 700 players on the entire planet in this league. There's not a lot of spots to go around and everyone else gets paid a lot of money to stop you... it's not easy."

Despite a paltry two goals, seven points, in 22 games – a sprained ankle cost him the start of the season – it seems the bottom hasn't fallen out of Perfetti's confidence.

He doesn't beat himself up quite like he used to, like when he was scratched from the lineup down the stretch and in the playoffs two years ago.

Live and learn, he says.

"I started to be really hard on myself. I started to doubt myself a little. That doesn't help. It's just a spiralling effect when you get there."

Head coach Scott Arniel knows how self-critical the 23-year-old can be, saying the two have had many good talks over the last four years.

After two seasons cut short by injury, Arniel was thrilled to see Perfetti suit up for all 82 games last year. And now this: a setback in training camp and his struggle to regain his place.

"He's more apologetic about the way things are going," the coach said. "As much as possible I've tried to be positive with him and show him stuff when he does the right things... areas where he can use his skill set."

Perfetti says the message is clear.

"You've got to go out and do your thing," he said. "Be the player that you are and be effective out there. Trying to do that as much as I can. Just trying to communicate and learn every day. If there is something they're seeing in my game, we'll fix that and move on."

Players often aren't alone in their struggles. As Arniel pointed out, a lack of chemistry with linemates can be part of the problem.

Perfetti was pretty happy with how it went for him, Vlad Namestnikov and Alex Iafallo on Saturday against Minnesota, even if they didn't produce a goal.

"We created a lot of chances, had a lot of zone time, good defensively," he said. "I hit the post in the first period, had a couple of good looks. Our line didn't give up much. That's all you can ask for... creating chances, and eventually pucks will go in the net."

Their next chance, and Perfetti's, comes Monday against Edmonton.

It's not whether he gets more or less than the 10:51 of ice time he had on Saturday. It's what he and his linemates do with it.

"We've got to do the same thing," he said. "Stay above them, get in their way, make life miserable for them when they have the puck, or even when they don't have the puck. If we play that structured, detailed defensive game, then the opportunities offensively are going to (come)."

"We don't have to go searching for it or cheating the game."

https://www.winnipegssun.com/sports/demelos-penalty-blunder-an-unfortunate-turn-of-events/article_0f6dff19-fc56-4399-9d3f-5e60fae3720f.html

Nightmare finish behind Jets, Oilers ahead

By Paul Friesen

Some 45 hours after one of the most crushing results of the season, the Winnipeg Jets get the rejuvenated Edmonton Oilers on Monday.

So there's no time to rue what might have been in Saturday's win that got away against Minnesota.

Defenceman Dylan DeMelo, for instance, will have to stop thinking about the penalty he took with 30 seconds to go, his team up, 3-2.

"I don't think I hit him very hard. I've definitely done a lot worse," DeMelo said on Sunday, referring to the hit on Joel Eriksson Ek that put him in the box. "Honestly, to me it looked like I gave him more of a push than a cross check. Just don't put yourself in that position at the end of the day. Because you don't know what's going to be called."

As for watching the Wild tie it up a mere eight seconds after taking his seat, DeMelo will have to ditch that memory, too.

To his credit, he resisted kicking the camera at his feet in the sin bin.

"I don't want to have an unnecessary fine or anything like that," he said. "At the end of the day, I don't think I need to take my frustration out on the camera. It's not the camera's fault in any way."

Head coach Scott Arniel hasn't been fined by the NHL, as far as we know, for his post-game comments about what he thought was a horrible non-call when Eriksson Ek hit Josh Morrissey from behind just seconds before DeMelo was flagged.

Arniel, too, will have to get over it quickly and focus on stopping Connor McDavid and Co., although that was still a bit too much to ask early Sunday afternoon.

"If that was KC (Kyle Connor) or if that was Scheif, or No. 97 coming in (McDavid) or Kaprizov or Hughes, those are elite players that do elite things," Arniel said, maybe not still seething, but not that far from it. "It was just very questionable. It was a very, very questionable call that we felt, with us in a one-goal game with a minute to go, that was something that didn't have to be done."

Morrissey's status for Monday is questionable because of the hit, no doubt adding fuel to Arniel's ire.

Then there's forward Gus Nyquist, the hard-luck, first-year Jet who has yet to put a single puck in the net for his new team.

Check that: Nyquist did actually put one in the net against Minnesota. He even enjoyed the celebration with his teammates, the thousand-pound weight off his shoulders, only to park himself on the bench and find out the play was being reviewed for a potential offside.

"It felt good at the moment," Nyquist said of what would have been his first in 27 games this season. "You wanted to get this one out of the way."

But...

"If you hear a challenge, you're pretty sure it's offside."

It was. Not-so-easy come, easy go.

"Everyone's gone offside," Nyquist said, using simple logic to push down whatever feelings might be left over. "It's part of the game. If I skate over the blue line and the linesman calls offside, we wouldn't have seen the shot, we wouldn't have seen the outcome."

True. But it seems so magnified, given his situation.

"Totally," Nyquist acknowledged. "I wish that would have been a good goal, for sure. But I can't keep thinking about what could have, should have. I've got to move on. Been creating a lot of chances the last seven to 10 games. Doesn't show up on the stats sheet, but that's all you can focus on."

"When it comes, then hopefully it comes in bunches."

He actually moved on already on Saturday, playing one of his best games, along with his teammates.

"We played a really good game and we should have walked out of there with two points. We should win that game every time. But it is what it is. We move on to the next one."

Talking to Nyquist, you'd never know he was slumping on a team that's plummeted to near the bottom of the overall standings.

Maybe it's the holiday break he took back home in Sweden that rejuvenated him, or maybe he's always like this. But he sounded convinced the Jets were on the verge of something good.

"This group in here know that we're a good team," he said. "We're going to show that the second part of the season. One hundred percent. This was the best team in the league last year.

"We have full belief. So we keep going."

That confidence is being tested. And it doesn't get any easier on Monday.

"We've got to put together a full 60 minutes like we did last game," Nyquist said. "Be ready from the start, and away we go."