

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/03/02/change-should-be-in-the-air-for-jets>

Change should be in the air for Jets While not waving white flag on season yet, club set to be sellers

By: Mike McIntyre

Welcome to a week of uncertainty — one that could leave the Winnipeg Jets looking a whole lot different by the time it's over.

A season-long eight-game homestand opens Tuesday under the looming cloud of Friday's trade deadline, with eight expiring contracts on the books of a struggling hockey club that finds itself well outside the playoff picture.

Change should be in the air. Just how much remains to be seen.

"It's just kind of wait-and-see," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said following Monday's sparsely attended optional practice at Hockey For All Centre.

"For me, it's what I've been saying since we got back from the (Olympic) break — just focus on what we can control, and that's the games we play. For those guys, I know it's hard. But those guys have also been in the league for a while and they understand this time of year and what it brings. Just go out and be the best player you can and give us a chance to win."

Arniel said he speaks daily with general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff about both the short- and long-term direction of the club. While the Jets aren't waving the white flag, it's difficult to envision them as anything but sellers. They woke up Monday nine points out of the final Western Conference wild-card spot with just 23 games remaining.

"(Cheveldayoff) is busy on the phone all week here, right up until Friday," said Arniel.

"I don't get too much into the conversation in terms of what team he's talking to or what player or what pick or any of that stuff. It's more about what my roster is going to look like tomorrow, what it's going to look like Thursday. I have to say Chevy and I talk lots, it's just at the end of the day it's him talking to opposition general managers. That's his part of the business."

"I try not to worry about it too much."

Winnipeg's list of pending unrestricted free agents is lengthy: backup goaltender Eric Comrie; defencemen Logan Stanley, Luke Schenn and Colin Miller (currently working his way back from injury); and forwards Jonathan Toews, Tanner Pearson, Gustav Nyquist and Cole Koepke.

It would be a shock — not to mention questionable asset management — if all of them remain by the weekend.

"I try not to worry about it too much," Koepke said Monday.

"I don't follow the social media stuff a ton anyways, but really, just kind of stay off of it this week. You see so many reports of 'this could happen, this can happen,' but that's all out of my control. And so just try not to read into it, and just focus on the day-to-day and where we are here, what we need to do as a team, and a lot of games coming up."

Winnipeg also has a handful of players — defenceman Haydn Fleury and forwards Morgan Barron, Nino Niederreiter (currently injured) and Vlad Namestnikov (also hurt) — entering the final year of their deals next season who could attract interest from contenders.

Fleury said the group is doing its best to block out the noise.

"I think the one thing we've done a really good job as players — and I think it's a testament to our leadership — is just try and win the game, win the next day," he said.

"I think we as a group feel like we've underachieved to this point in the season, but there's still a huge amount of belief in this team. We're right there... If we can get going on a roll here we're as confident a group as anybody."

The Jets (23-26-10) are coming off a three-game road trip that began with a win in Vancouver before consecutive overtime losses in Anaheim and San Jose. They'll now spend the next two weeks at Canada Life Centre, starting with Tuesday's visit from the Chicago Blackhawks.

"We've got to make hay here. We've gotta win this next game. Let's find a way," said Arniel.

"We got four of six (points) on the road and we gained one point. So that's how tough the mountain is that we have to climb here. And we need some help around the league, we need some other teams to lose. But we have to take care of our business. We've got all these games at home. If we can win them all, that might be a great sign for us moving forward."

Most analytics models peg the Jets' playoff odds between three and five per cent. It will likely take at least 90 points to claim the final Western Conference wild-card berth, meaning Winnipeg needs a minimum of 34 points from its final 23 games — essentially a 17-6-0 run. And even that might not be enough.

The schedule won't offer many favours. Three games remain against the league-leading Colorado Avalanche, two against the Pacific Division-leading Vegas Golden Knights, plus single matchups with Atlantic Division-leading Tampa Bay, third-overall Dallas, and current playoff teams in Anaheim, Pittsburgh, Utah, Boston and Seattle.

Even a decent stretch run guarantees nothing. The Jets have lost just four of their past 17 games in regulation (8-4-5) but have barely chipped away at the deficit. A disastrous 30-game stretch earlier this season — a 6-19-5 slide — dug the crater.

They'll now try to snap a three-game winless skid at the downtown rink, which included back-to-back 5-1 losses to Detroit and Montreal before the Olympic break.

"We are all excited to be back at home. We haven't played at home in a long time now," said Koepke, who hopes this remains his professional address beyond Friday.

"I've enjoyed my time here a lot. I've really enjoyed the guys. It's a really close locker room. The season hasn't totally panned out as we've expected it to. We've kind of underachieved so far to

this point, but I still believe in what we have in this locker room, and so that's kind of just what we're focusing on now."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/03/02/fleury-feels-lucky-injury-wasnt-worse>

***Fleury feels lucky injury wasn't worse
Jets defenceman thankful to return seven weeks after crashing into boards***

By: Mike McIntyre

Haydn Fleury remembers the silence.

From his own mouth, unable to form any words after a devastating crash into the end boards. And from the crowd inside Canada Life Centre, stunned at what they had just witnessed.

Nearly two months after the freak accident that ended with him being stretchered off the ice, the Winnipeg Jets defenceman can finally talk about what happened — and the long, painstaking road back into the lineup.

"Happened fast. I was just going back for a puck, and just an unfortunate play, really," Fleury said Monday, reflecting on the Jan. 6 collision with Vegas Golden Knights forward (and Winnipegger) Keegan Kolesar.

"I was extremely winded, but knew I was alright. But I couldn't really get any words out of my mouth to tell Mullet (head trainer Rob Milette) that."

The impact left Fleury with multiple injuries to his neck and head, including a broken nose caused by his own legs folding into his face from the force of the crash.

"I'm not the most flexible guy either," said Fleury.

"It was really quiet. Once Mullet got out there and he just kind of laid me down, the whole building is quiet. I'm in my own little zone, but you can also just feel the stuff around you. You could tell everybody was worried and I really appreciate all the messages I got from people from Winnipeg, from Uber Eats gift cards to barbecue brisket."

Fleury's wife was at the game that night and joined him in the ambulance as they went to hospital, where he was kept for observation.

"At that point I was able to tell her that I was okay and I could move and there wasn't going to be any life-damaging things," he said.

"After that, kind of took it day-by-day, and slowly got back in the gym. Kind of like the beginning of summer stuff. Kind of got a re-start, kind of build everything back up. I was able to get back on the ice the week before the Olympic break. And then felt really good that week, so I knew coming off the Olympic break it wasn't going to be too much longer."

Fleury returned to the lineup on Sunday in San Jose. He even got some time during the three-on-three overtime session, with top blue-liners Josh Morrissey and Neal Pionk currently sidelined with their own injuries.

“My wife was extremely nervous for that game (Sunday),” said Fleury.

“I don’t think she watched too much. Me, it’s just getting back out there, seeing the progression day-by-day. Probably should have done a better job of communicating that with her, take a little bit of nerves off her. But no, it was probably a more nerve-wracking day for her.”

This isn’t the first time Fleury has been involved in a scary on-ice collision. While playing with the Tampa Bay Lightning in April 2024, Fleury accidentally ran into referee Steve Kozari, who suffered a head injury and was also stretchered off the ice, ultimately making a full recovery.

“I was probably more aware this time than the last one. Hopefully just avoid that kind of stuff for a little bit here,” said Fleury, who has also battled several concussions over his career including one earlier this season.

He didn’t want to disclose exactly what injuries he suffered in this latest incident.

“Mullet and the staff here did a really good job at just wanting to be patient and just letting it kind of run its course, and then building it back up from there and being able to feel good,” said Fleury.

“And walking around day-to-day with no pain is the biggest thing.

Did he ever have doubts about returning?

“I’m a hockey player,” he said, shaking his head. “Definitely extremely lucky. Could have been a lot worse. I’m just extremely thankful.”

Fleury, 29, has been limited to just 18 games with the Jets this season. The Saskatchewan product has one year left on his current contract.

While Pionk is still considered week-to-week, there was some good news on Monday about Morrissey. He skated on his own for a third straight day and is expected to join the team in a non-contact jersey for Tuesday’s morning skate.

“He’s probably getting real close to the weekend,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

“Thursday, there’s a chance, but hoping Vancouver (on Saturday), if not then we have two more days off before next week. It’s also a situation where I need him, but I also don’t want to lose him again. It’s just making sure he’s comfortable to be back out there doing what he needs to do.”

Morrissey suffered an upper-body injury during the first game of the Winter Olympics, missing Canada’s five other contests including the gold medal game.

Jets defenceman Colin Miller is also currently sidelined but participated in Monday’s optional skate in a non-contact sweater. The Jets are also without injured forwards Vlad Namestnikov and Nino Niederreiter, who are both considered week-to-week. Arniel said he’s hopeful they could return before the end of the regular season.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/2026/03/02/with-deadline-looming-underachieving-jets-know-its-now-or-never-to-go-on-a-run/>

With deadline looming, underachieving Jets know it's now or never to go on a run (VIDEO)

Winnipeg opens an eight-game homestand against the Blackhawks on Tuesday and the players know it's now or never to go on a run. With the NHL's trade deadline looming on Mar. 9, the Jets understand they need to try to keep the focus on the ice, and aren't willing to throw in the towel on the season.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11712695/analysis-unfamiliar-role-winnipeg-jets-nhl-trade-deadline/>

ANALYSIS: Unfamiliar role for Winnipeg Jets heading into NHL trade deadline

By Ross Levitan CJOB

Waking up Monday morning, the Winnipeg Jets find themselves nine points out of a playoff spot with four teams to jump. It's a tall task.

The grim outlook is backed by probability. MoneyPuck.com has Winnipeg's current playoff chances sitting at 5.2 per cent, which is the eighth-longest odds in the entire league.

But make no mistake, the Jets aren't entering a rebuild.

Connor Hellebuyck is signed for five more seasons. That in itself should be the organization's competitive window.

Add in that the entire top line of Kyle Connor, Mark Scheifele and Gabe Vilardi for five or more years and you can see the core of a long-term contender.

So Winnipeg is in a much different situation this week than the other Western Canadian teams that are out of a playoff spot.

The Calgary Flames could potentially move Nazem Kadri, Blake Coleman and MacKenzie Weeger, among others.

Seemingly anyone and everyone could be on the move in Vancouver.

But for Winnipeg, the goal for this trade deadline has to be with next season in mind.

How long have the Jets needed to address their second-line centre role? Would it make sense to try and find a long-term solution now, or wait until the summer?

Depth on the back end has been tested, with 11 defencemen finding their way into an NHL game this season, but is this D corps deep enough to compete?

For trade chips, look at the Jets to potentially move off of pending free agents to recoup some draft capital, considering they don't have their own second- or fourth-round picks in either of the next two drafts.

Jonathan Toews has a no-move clause and has made it clear he wants to stay.

But what about Gustav Nyquist, who's still unbelievably sitting on zero goals in 38 games? Luke Schenn is a commodity many teams look for on deadline day — a veteran who has a Stanley Cup on his resume.

Then there's Logan Stanley, the most polarizing of all. He's having a career year offensively but still has some serious flaws in his game.

There have been contract talks, but nothing has materialized. The Jets couldn't risk losing him for nothing if a contract extension isn't reached this week...could they?

One phone call can change everything — and we're just days away from what should be an interesting trade deadline for the Winnipeg Jets.

Winnipeg Sun

https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/winnipeg_jets/arniel-keeps-quiet-about-gms-plans-for-trade-deadline/article_38a74d58-8984-4030-aeb7-d0f7f3a695b8.html

'Wait and see': Arniel tight-lipped on GM's plan at trade deadline

By Paul Friesen

If his GM has given him a drop-dead date for a sell-off, Scott Arniel isn't saying.

With the NHL trade deadline arriving on Friday, the Winnipeg Jets head coach says he and Kevin Cheveldayoff speak every day.

But Arniel on Monday wasn't divulging exactly what direction those talks were heading, even if his team's play suggests it'll be a hard seller, not a buyer.

"It's just wait and see," Arniel said. "You don't know what teams are true buyers, what teams are true sellers, yet. There's so many teams that are still in the mix that it's a little bit of the unknown. He's busy on the phone all week here, right up until Friday. I don't get too much into the conversation in terms of what team he's talking to or what player or what pick, or any of that stuff.

"It's more about what my roster is going to look like tomorrow and what it's going to look like Thursday."

The Jets (23-26-10) have at least eight pending unrestricted free agents going into a season-long, eight-game home stand beginning Tuesday against Chicago (23-28-9).

Coming off a three-game trip that saw them collect just one win and two overtime losses, their 56 points leaves them nine out of a playoff spot, with 23 games left.

38-not-so-special

For Gus Nyquist, this trade-deadline stuff is old hat.

“Been traded three times now,” the Jets winger said. “They were all at the deadline, at the end of a deal. Scenario’s been the same for me all those three times. I had some choices in some of them.”

Without a no-trade clause in his contract, the 36-year-old Nyquist has no say in the matter this time.

For Cheveldayoff, Nyquist probably has little, if any, trade cache. Zero goals in 38 games will do that to a player.

It’ll do other things, too.

“Frustration grows, for sure,” Nyquist said. “But you can just control what you can control, and that’s your hard work and doing little things right. And eventually it’ll come.”

He was saying and hoping the same things when we talked to him back in late November. At the time, his drought was 16 games.

“I’m sure now he’s to the point where he’s probably gripping that stick pretty tight,” Arniel said. “It digs into you. And it’s hard. So, mentally, you have to be strong when you’re going through those situations.”

One of Cheveldayoff’s free-agent signings last summer, the Swede had averaged close to 19 goals per season over his previous 10 campaigns.

He didn’t want to dig too deep into the personal toll a slump of this magnitude takes.

His family isn’t with him in Winnipeg, so he leans on his teammates – and ignores the outside noise.

“I guess I’m not out and about that much,” he said. “And social media, I turned off many, many years ago. There’s a lot of writers and non-writers out there that think they know a lot. World problems could be solved with them.”

If only they could solve his slump.

Morrissey close

Arniel hopes to have top defenceman Josh Morrissey back in the lineup for Saturday’s game against Vancouver.

Morrissey skated on his own, Monday.

“Thursday (against Tampa Bay), there’s a chance,” Arniel said. “But hoping Vancouver. If not, then we have two more days off before next week. I need him, but I also don’t want to lose him again. It’s just making sure he’s comfortable to be back out there doing what he needs to do.”

https://www.winnipeg.sun.com/sports/winnipeg_jets/committed-to-the-ice-fleurys-injury-challenges-wont-stop-him/article_400c3ed9-091d-490c-a33e-563682ca8762.html

'I'm a hockey player': Injury history won't stop Jets' Fleury

By Paul Friesen

Haydn Fleury was thrilled to get back in the Winnipeg Jets lineup in San Jose on Sunday.

His better half, not so much.

"My wife was extremely nervous for that game," the Jets defenceman said on Monday. "I don't think she watched too much. It was probably a more nerve-wracking day for her."

Not as nerve-wracking as that night on Jan. 6, when Fleury lost his footing and went sliding, back-first, at high speed into the end boards in a home game against Vegas.

A crowd that had been buzzing when silent.

Fleury was, too, initially unable to even tell the Jets medical staff what he was feeling.

"I was extremely winded, but I knew I was alright," he said. "But I couldn't really get any words out of my mouth."

The Jets trainer and team doctor called for a stretcher, and Fleury was wheeled off the ice and to the hospital.

"I'm in my own little zone, but you can also just feel the stuff around you. You could tell everybody was worried," he said. "It was really eerily quiet in the building. My wife was at the game, so she came with me to the hospital. At that point I was able to tell her that I was okay and I could move and there wasn't going to be any life-damaging things."

The 29-year-old didn't want to get into the extent of his injuries, other than to say he suffered a broken nose from the force of his own leg.

He missed so much time, though, and was so inactive during his recovery, that he says it felt like the beginning of summer training when he initially got back in the gym.

The week before the Olympic break, he finally got back on the ice – a step he badly needed to take, mentally and physically.

"When I got to go on the ice and just skate by myself, was huge, honestly, for my mental health," he said. "Just being able to get back out there and skate and feel the puck and do what makes me happy. Once that went well, I knew I wasn't much longer until I'd be back skating with the guys and being around the team a lot more after the Olympic break."

Sunday in San Jose, nearly two months after the incident, head coach Scott Arniel finally called his number.

While his stat line wasn't particularly noteworthy – no points, 12:47 of ice time and a minus-2, including the Sharks' overtime winner – the game marked yet another hurdle overcome by the Saskatchewan native.

A first-round draft pick by Carolina a dozen years ago, Fleury's NHL career has been derailed more often than any prairie freight train.

The 67 NHL games he played as a rookie in 2017-18 remains the highest total of his nine seasons, injuries and just plain difficulty getting into the lineup causing him to average less than 40 games per year.

If he plays all 28 remaining this season, he'll hit 41, his highest total in six years.

In an interview with the Winnipeg Sun Early last season, his first with the Jets, Fleury acknowledged the pressure of expectation – he was drafted seventh, overall – used to get to him.

“It was maybe hard to live up to at first,” he said then. “But the older I've gotten, I really try to worry about what I can do... stay off social media, and keep my inner circle tight.”

His social-media ban was tested after this latest injury, Fleury admitting he watched the scary incident a time or two.

“I couldn't avoid it for the first couple days,” he said. “There was a guy that does bad sports injuries on social media and I saw his clip. Definitely extremely lucky. Could have been a lot worse. I'm just extremely thankful.”

He's thankful, too, for all the well-wishes he received.

“I really appreciate all the messages I got from people from Winnipeg, from Uber Eats gift cards to barbecue brisket. I got a lot of stuff, and a lot of people were reaching out and I really appreciate it.”

Fleury signed with Winnipeg after a forgettable, injury-riddled year with Tampa Bay, one that saw him suffer two concussions and a broken finger, along with hip and glute injuries that limited him to 24 games.

At that point, his career concussion count was at four, something he brushed aside like he might swat a puck away from an opponent.

Asked if this latest incident caused him to experience any doubts about returning, he didn't hesitate.

“I'm a hockey player.”