

***THREE THINGS: Slow start hurts Jets in St. Louis
Jets were shut out for the fourth time this season in 1-0 loss to Blues***

By Jamie Thomas

Joel Hofer made 24 saves as the St. Louis Blues beat the Winnipeg Jets 1-0 at Enterprise Center. The Jets have now dropped four straight games on the road and saw their record drop to 15-16-2. Kyle Connor saw his nine-game point streak come to an end, Connor Hellebuyck stopped 25 of 26 Blues shots. The Jets will continue their three-game road trip Friday in Denver when they face the Colorado Avalanche.

SURVIVED THE FIRST

St. Louis has not been kind to the Jets going back to last April where they were outscored 17-5 in their opening round series against the Blues. After some solid scoring chances by Winnipeg, the Blues took over, Robert Thomas hit the goalpost, Pavel Buchnevich rang one off the crossbar. Connor Hellebuyck then made seven consecutive stops, and some were grade A scoring chances. Because of that, the Jets went into the dressing room tied at zero.

GOTTA SCORE FIRST

Coming into Wednesday night, the Jets were 13-4-1 when scoring first but 2-11-1 when the opposition gets on the board first. The game was scoreless in the second period, the Blues forecheck forced a turnover in the Jets corner, Robert Thomas saw Justin Faulk moving into the slot and the Blues defenceman beat Hellebuyck to give St. Louis a 1-0 lead. That goal would hold up as the game winner as Winnipeg would suffer their fourth shutout loss of the season.

"I think our starts haven't been great. Definitely work on that," said Kyle Connor.

"And it's one shift on, one shift off. It kind of seems like here, so it's been going on for seems like a long time here, almost a month, and it's not the way we want to play, and it's just keep going on. So, we got to find a way to get out of it."

1,100 GAMES FOR JT

Toews skated in his 1,100th career NHL game on Wednesday against the Blues. Toews became the 27th active player to play in 1,100 NHL games, with both Jeff Skinner and Mikael Backlund doing so as they played in a game against each other on Tuesday night. Toews finished his 1,100th game playing 11:26 and registering one shot on goal and went 81.8% in the faceoff circle.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/ottawa-senators-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-december-15-2025>

***Faulk scores lone goal, Blues shut out Jets
Hofer makes 24 saves; Connor point streak ends at 9 for Winnipeg, which has lost 5 of 6***

By Lou Korac

ST. LOUIS -- Justin Faulk scored the lone goal, and Joel Hofer made 24 saves for the St. Louis Blues in a 1-0 win against the Winnipeg Jets at Enterprise Center on Wednesday.

It was Hofer's third shutout of the season and fifth of his NHL career.

"All wins are nice," said Hofer, a Winnipeg native. "It's obviously nice to beat them. They've obviously become a rival of ours. That was tough the last time we played them (a 4-3 double-overtime loss in Game 7 of the 2025 Western Conference First Round). That was extra motivation for us. It's just good that we got the win tonight."

Robert Thomas had an assist for the Blues (13-15-7), who had lost three of their previous four (1-3-0).

"It's hard to know what to expect with the way the season has gone, to be honest," St. Louis coach Jim Montgomery said. "It was nice to see the way we started the game, the way we did compete. It did turn into the playoff-type game that wasn't as physical as the playoffs, but it was physical for this regular season, that's for sure."

Jonatan Berggren, who was claimed off waivers from the Detroit Red Wings on Tuesday, had three shots on goal in 12:45 of ice time in his Blues debut.

"Some high-end passes," Montgomery said of Berggren. "The backhand one, that's high-end vision there to send in Dalibor Dvorsky on the breakaway and then the slip play he makes in the offensive zone to Pius Suter (in the second period), who almost stuffs it in on the weak side. He had a couple more really connected passes."

Connor Hellebuyck made 25 saves for the Jets (15-16-2), who are 1-4-1 in their past six games and were shut out for the fourth time this season.

"There was a push on (in the third period), but more than anything in the other two periods, there were spurts for five minutes where it looked like we were doing the right things, five, six minutes and all of the sudden, there was five, six, eight minutes where St. Louis took the game over," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "Gave up some rush chances and in the first period, we gave up eight chances on one shift."

"But the third period, there's looks. We had opportunities, but at the end of the day, we didn't get enough pucks through. St. Louis did a good job getting in lanes, but we didn't do a good enough job ... creating that chaos around the net front."

Faulk gave St. Louis a 1-0 lead at 13:17 of the second period after Pavel Buchnevich pressured Jets defenseman Dylan DeMelo in the corner. Buchnevich forced the puck loose for Thomas,

who found Faulk coming down the slot for a wrist shot into the top corner over Hellebuyck's blocker.

"It looked like a little turnover in the corner and 'Tommer' put some pressure on them," Faulk said. "We know he can make those plays and I just jumped up. I don't know, it looked like [Pius Suter] was coming too. One of us had to grab it, but great play by him and I just tried getting it off as soon as possible."

The Blues were able to shut down Winnipeg's top line of Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Gabriel Vilardi. Connor's nine-game point streak came to an end (four goals, nine assists).

St. Louis was 0-for-4 on the power play; Winnipeg was 0-for-2.

"We've got to generate some more chances and some more looks than that," Connor said. "We just weren't able to get going there, so it's frustrating."

NOTES: Hofer's shutout tied Filip Gustavsson, Ilya Sorokin and Sergei Bobrovsky for the second-highest total in the NHL this season. Only Jesper Wallstedt has more (four). ... Jets center Jonathan Toews had one shot on goal and won nine of 11 face-offs in 11:26 of ice time in his 1,100th NHL game. ... St. Louis forward Otto Stenberg, a first-round pick (No. 25) in the 2023 NHL Draft, played 13:38 in his NHL debut.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/2025/12/18/button-jets-are-playing-like-a-bottom-of-the-league-team/>

Button: Jets are playing like a 'bottom of the league team' (VIDEO)

With the Jets having the worst record in the league since November 4th, Craig Button joins SportsCentre to break down why Winnipeg has been struggling since then, and discuss if depth scoring is a major issue for the team.

<https://www.tsn.ca/video/2025/12/17/are-hellebuyck-and-binnington-locks-be-olympic-starters/>

Are Hellebuyck and Binnington locks to be Olympic starters? (VIDEO)

Despite no 4 Nations final rematch between Connor Hellebuyck and Jordan Binnington Wednesday night with the Blues' starter getting the night off, OverDrive host Bryan Hayes and TSN Hockey analysts Martin Biron and Frankie Corrado join Domino's That's Hockey to discuss if the two goalies are locks to be starters for the United States and Canada at the Olympics.

Associated Press

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/struggling-jets-shutout-by-blues-hofer-makes-24-saves/>

'We've got to step up': Jets' struggles continue in shutout loss to Blues

By Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Justin Faulk scored and Joel Hofer made 24 saves to lift the St. Louis Blues to a 1-0 win over the stumbling Winnipeg Jets on Wednesday night.

Hofer earned his third shutout of the season and the fifth in his career in the first meeting between the Blues and Jets since Winnipeg beat St. Louis in the Manitoba Miracle on May 4 in game seven of their first-round Stanley Cup playoff series.

Connor Hellebuyck made 25 saves for Winnipeg, which has lost five of its last six contests.

"We've been kind of saying that for a while," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said after the game when asked if his team was lacking confidence. "That's part of your job. That's what you get paid for. Show up. Do your job."

Faulk scored his eighth goal of the season on a feed from Robert Thomas with 6:43 remaining in the second period to give St. Louis the lead.

Winnipeg is 2-12-1 when allowing its opponent to score first this season.

"To a man, we've got to step up and prepare better," said Jets forward Kyle Connor. "It's one shift on, one shift off, it kind of seems like here. It's been going on for like a long time here, almost a month, and it's not the way we want to play. And it just keeps going on. So we've got to find a way to get out of it."

Jets centre Jonathan Toews skated in his 1,100th career NHL game, becoming the 27th player in league history to accomplish the feat after San Jose forward Jeff Skinner and Calgary centre Mikael Backlund reached that milestone on Tuesday night.

Blues forward Otto Stenberg made his NHL debut after being selected by the team with the 25th overall pick in the 2023 NHL Entry Draft, and forward Jonatan Berggren made his debut with the team after being claimed off waivers from Detroit on Tuesday.

Up next

Jets: At Colorado Friday night.

Blues: Host the New York Rangers on Thursday night

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/17/jets-find-another-way-to-lose>

Jets find another way to lose Team that can't shoot straight blanked by Blues

By: Mike McIntyre

ST. LOUIS — This time around, the “Manitoba Miracle” would have been the Winnipeg Jets scoring even once.

A fragile hockey club that can't seem to do much right these days found yet another frustrating way to lose on Wednesday night, falling 1-0 to the St. Louis Blues to kick off a critical three-game road trip.

“We’ve been kind of saying that for a while. That’s part of your job. That’s what you get paid for. Show up. Do your job,” an obviously frustrated Jets head coach Scott Arniel told the Free Press outside the Jets locker room.

Blues goaltender — and Winnipeg product — Joel Hofer stopped all 24 shots he faced, with his teammates doing a great job in front of him for much of the night. The Jets mustered 60 shot attempts, but a whopping 20 went wide and another 16 were blocked.

Suddenly, a team that is having trouble scoring can’t even shoot straight.

“To a man, we’ve got to step up and prepare better,” said Jets forward Kyle Connor. “It’s one shift on, one shift off it kind of seems like here. It’s been going on for like a long time here, almost a month, and it’s not the way we want to play. And it just keep going on. So we’ve got to find a way to get out of it.”

This was the first meeting of the Central Division rivals since their epic playoff series last spring, which ended with Cole Perfetti tying the game in the dying seconds of Game 7 and then captain Adam Lowry winning it in double overtime.

Oh, how the mighty have fallen.

Winnipeg — which captured the Presidents’ Trophy last year with a record of 56-22-4 — is now an ugly 15-16-2. They got off to a hot start this year, going 9-3-0 out of the gate, but have just six wins in the 21 games since.

“We’re struggling right now to find it,” said Jets defenceman Dylan Samberg.

“We’ve just got to find a way to find it and get back on track. It’s just not easy right now going through it. But we have 49 games left. We’re kind of coming to the halfway point of the season. We’ve got to figure it out here.”

The Jets are now ahead of only five teams based on point percentage. One of those is St. Louis, which improves to 13-15-7 and actually passed Winnipeg in points (the Blues have played two extra games).

HOUSE OF HORRORS: This must have felt like an exorcism for Connor Hellebuyck.

The Jets goaltender started three playoff games in St. Louis last spring — and finished exactly none of them. He got the hook every time, serenaded by jeers from the Blues faithful after giving up 16 goals on 66 shots.

Wednesday was an entirely different story, with Hellebuyck the best player on the ice and the only reason this wasn't a blowout.

Midway through the first, with the Jets under siege, the Blues had a 9-1 shot advantage.

"He was solid all game for us and the reason that it was a 1-0 game," said Samberg.

According to Natural Stat Trick, the Blues had 18 high-danger chances on the night, with the Jets registering 10. St. Louis had 4.01 expected goals based on the underlying metrics, which means Hellebuyck stopped 3.01 goals-above-expected.

That, folks, is sensational, and, given the result, a complete waste of an outstanding performance.

"There were spurts where it'd be five minutes where we were doing the right things. Five, six minutes and then all of a sudden, man we weren't," Arniel said of his Jekyll and Hyde club.

"There were five or six, eight minutes where St. Louis just took the game over. In the first period, we gave up eight chances on one shift."

Sure, the Jets mounted a bit of a push in the final 20 minutes, but it was too little, too late.

"At the end of the day we didn't get enough pucks through," said Arniel.

"St. Louis did a good job of getting in lanes but we didn't do a good enough job, especially when it got to the top, our D finding a way to get that down to create some of that chaos around the net front."

BATTERED BLUES: To be clear, this wasn't exactly the 2019 Stanley Cup champion Blues staring down the Jets on Wednesday night. Heck, it wasn't even the ideal 2025 version of the team.

St. Louis has been decimated by injuries so far this season, with forwards Jordan Kyrou, Dylan Holloway, Jimmy Snuggerud, Nick Bjugstad and Nathan Walker all currently sidelined. You'd likely see most, if not all of those players in the top nine if they were healthy.

To help fill the gaps, St. Louis had two players make their debuts against Winnipeg. Otto Stenberg, the 25th-overall pick from 2023, played his first ever NHL game while Jonatan Berggren, picked up off waivers Monday from the Detroit Red Wings, was thrown right into the lineup.

Despite that, a Jets team that is completely healthy couldn't find a way to get it done.

The closest they'd come to scoring was a Perfetti deflection off the crossbar in the second period, which sums up the way things have been going for the slumping winger (and almost all of his teammates, many of whom are in extended offensive droughts).

This is the fourth time Winnipeg has been blanked this season.

"We got ourselves in a one-goal game on the road and you have to find a way to score goals," said Arniel. "You can't win games without scoring goals. We talk about defending and doing the right things. Well, offensively we've got to do the right things as well and we've got to do it more consistently."

KEY PLAY: Dylan DeMelo turned the puck over in his own zone, resulting in Robert Thomas feeding a wide-open Justin Faulk who wired a shot past Hellebuyck at 13:17 of the second period.

THREE STARS:

1. WPG G Connor Hellebuyck: 25 saves.
2. STL G Joel Hofer: 24 save shutout
3. STL D Justin Faulk: Game-winning goal.

EXTRA, EXTRA: The Jets went 0-for-2 on the power play, which has really gone cold as of late. While the struggling penalty kill had a perfect night — going 3-for-3 — the fact Winnipeg once again took more infractions than their opponent was seen by Arniel as a momentum-killer.

That was especially the case with 41 seconds left in the third period. Defenceman Logan Stanley drilled St. Louis forward Pius Suter from behind after the whistle, putting his team shorthanded for the rest of the game and essentially killing any chance of a comeback.

"There's frustration there for sure," said Arniel.

Stanley was also slapped with a 10-minute misconduct on the play. He took the first penalty of the game, too, an iffy holding call earlier in the first which didn't help Winnipeg's slow start.

Arniel made one in-game line switch, putting Alex Iafallo up on the top line with Connor and Mark Scheifele and moving Gabe Vilardi down to play with Lowry and Morgan Barron for the third period.

Winnipeg's three healthy scratches were defencemen Colin Miller and Haydn Fleury and forward Tanner Pearson.

The Jets flew to Denver following the game and are set to practise Thursday afternoon in the Mile High City. They'll meet the league-leading Colorado Avalanche on Friday night, then finish up this road trip Sunday in Salt Lake City against the Utah Mammoth.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/17/from-bros-to-foes>

From bros to foes

Schenn brothers meet for first time this season, relive first-round scrap

By: Mike McIntyre

ST. LOUIS — It was a wild moment in an epic playoff series that had no shortage of them.

Now, at long last, we can bring you the scoop on what exactly went down between Luke and Brayden Schenn last spring — a confrontation that escalated to the point officials had to step in.

Turns out the highly competitive brothers, who are otherwise best friends when they're not trying to end each other's seasons, were locked in a salty game of one-upmanship as the on-ice temperature soared.

With Luke's Winnipeg Jets getting blown out by Brayden's St. Louis Blues in Game 3 of their first-round matchup, a post-whistle scrum involving multiple players followed. Threats flew: Brayden promising to come after more of Luke's teammates — something he'd already done plenty of, as Mark Scheifele would attest — and Luke vowing painful retribution in return.

Referees Kyle Rehman and Trevor Hanson had heard enough, sending Brayden to an early shower with a 10-minute misconduct. At that point, Luke delivered a memorable zinger: "What, are you our mother?"

The hostilities continued in Game 4, which was yet another blowout loss for Winnipeg that evened the best-of-seven series at 2-2. This time, it was Luke whose night ended early with a misconduct following another third-period brouhaha.

It was after those games that a text arrived from the most important official in their lives: their father, Jeff. The message essentially scolded both sons for their boorish behaviour and told them to dial it back a few notches.

Of course, none of this should surprise anyone familiar with the Schenn brothers. They've been pushing and competing with each other for years, all the way back to when an eight-year-old Brayden shot a rubber band at his big brother's face, which prompted Luke to punch him back and break his own hand in the process.

"We don't take these opportunities for granted."

Beyond the occasional brutality lies a deep bond, one Luke, 36, reflected on Wednesday as he prepared to line up against Brayden, 34, once again, with slightly lower stakes this time around.

"We don't take these opportunities for granted," he told the Free Press.

"They don't happen too often and they won't happen forever. It's exciting. We push each other throughout our whole lives and careers and talk pretty much every day. Check in with each other, see how each other is doing. Any time we get the chance to play against each other, it's certainly special."

It was a summer like no other for the Saskatchewan products, given what unfolded between their teams on May 4. Luke jokingly blamed their father, who told them before the series began that he didn't care who won but hoped it would go to overtime in Game 7, and then "you can figure it out from there."

File that under be careful what you wish for. The Blues were seconds away from advancing before Cole Perfetti pulled off the Manitoba Miracle by tying it in the dying seconds of the third, followed by captain Adam Lowry capping off the incredible comeback with the double-OT dagger.

"It was so emotional," said Luke. "It was strange for sure, and we'll look back at it as a crazy memory."

The toughest part was cutting off communication for the two weeks they were going head-to-head. No, the few words they exchanged in the heat of the moment don't count.

"Like we're losing in St. Louis here and getting smoked, and the guy I would normally call for advice would be Brayden. It's a strange feeling not being able to talk to the guy you literally talk to every day about hockey," said Luke.

That's never an issue during the regular season. Recent chatter between the brothers has instead centred on their shared struggles. Neither the Jets nor the Blues are where they'd hoped to be in the standings as they got set to meet for the first time this year.

"It's a strange feeling not being able to talk to the guy you literally talk to every day about hockey."

"There's certainly been some adversity throughout the year for both teams. At the end of the day, I think the only thing we can fall back on is continuing to work and compete," said Luke.

"That's the only way to get out of it. There's obviously a lot of pressure on both teams after what happened last year to do well. Saying that, it's still early enough in the season you can get on a run and turn things around."

Brayden, the Blues captain, knows that better than anyone. His club was dead last in the league at the Christmas break in 2019 before an incredible second-half surge all the way to the Stanley Cup.

Luke said he's not sure that's "the recipe" anyone wishes to follow, but it does provide hope that brighter days could be ahead. Of course, the Blues, who entered play Wednesday one point behind the Jets, are likely thinking the same thing.

Sounds like some more sibling rivalry could be on the horizon.

THE FULL MONTY

There's no question the Blues had Wednesday's date with the Jets circled on their calendar — but maybe not for the reasons you'd expect.

This was less about revenge for a heartbreaking Game 7 loss and more about a hopeful return to the "good old days" for a struggling group.

“Obviously we would have liked to have won Game 7, but more importantly we were playing a really good brand of hockey. I think for a lot of players it brings excitement to get back to that brand of hockey we can play. It brings back excitement of what a great series it was,” said Blues head coach Jim Montgomery.

“It was old school hockey. It was mean, it was hard, it was vicious. And in the end you had two teams that really competed and emptied the tank so much. The handshake line was what you want in Stanley Cup playoffs.”

Life moves fast in the NHL, and Montgomery was asked to reflect on how much has changed for Winnipeg and St. Louis. Both teams wouldn’t even qualify for the playoffs if the post-season started today, despite lofty expectations created by last year’s success.

“I don’t think anyone last year thought Winnipeg would be the Presidents’ (Trophy) winner. Maybe a wildcard team. Maybe third place. But definitely not win this really tough division. And I think this year, coming back, the expectations were they were going to try to get closer to the Stanley Cup. Not about qualifying for the playoffs,” said Montgomery.

“And the same thing has happened for us. We had that good run (last year) and a lot of people thought, ‘Well, this will be a playoff team.’ And that hasn’t transpired for us. Unfortunately, that breeds negativity. And I’m not talking externally. Who cares externally. Internally.”

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/16/different-overtime-combos-dont-produce>

***Different overtime combos don’t produce
Jets still in search of consistency outside of top line, Stanley***

By: Ken Wiebe

The only thing Mark Scheifele could do was look skyward in disbelief.

The Winnipeg Jets’ first-line centre was on the ice in the waning moments of Monday’s game with the Ottawa Senators, doing everything in his power to help preserve a one-goal lead.

With Senators defenceman Jake Sanderson looking to unload a shot from the point during a six-on-five situation, Scheifele instinctively got his stick in the lane in an effort to block it.

Instead of preventing the puck from getting to the net, Sanderson’s shot changed direction and somehow made it behind Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck with 1:54 to go in regulation time.

“Yeah, that was one of those ones where you almost can’t believe it,” Scheifele said on Tuesday before the Jets departed to St. Louis to open a three-game road trip against the Blues. “It hits the middle of your stick and happens to go up in the air so slow and somehow comes down in the net. That’s the way she goes sometimes.”

There’s no doubt the play represents a bit of bad luck for Scheifele, who is having a fantastic season for the Jets.

Rather than lament the unfortunate bounce on the equalizer, Scheifele and company quickly went on the attack in overtime, creating an early opportunity for defenceman Josh Morrissey.

One shift later, Scheifele showcased his vision and passing ability, executing a perfect pass through the skates of Senators captain Brady Tkachuk and onto the stick of Kyle Connor, who was robbed on the redirection chance by Senators goalie Linus Ullmark.

What did Scheifele see in real time as the odd-man rush developed?

"Honestly it looked like a pretty big hole to me," said Scheifele, who is up to 16 goals and 40 points in 32 games this season. "You're just trying to read their stick, the way they turn their feet, all that kind of stuff."

"If I were to re-do it again, I probably wish that pass was a hair faster to beat the goalie. Great save. Ullmark made two big saves in overtime to keep them in it, so kudos to him."

PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTION

During his media availability, Jets head coach Scott Arniel was asked a few questions about the deployment of his bench in overtime.

The trio of Scheifele, Connor and Morrissey routinely start the three-on-three sessions for the Jets and they've enjoyed a tremendous amount of success over the years, often ending the extra session in the opening minute.

With that in mind, how does Arniel decide which players are going over the boards next?

"It has a lot to do with who's coming over the boards on the opposition side as well," said Arniel. "They started (Claude) Giroux to get the faceoff and then (Senators head coach Travis Green is) making changes. It's just different scenarios that come from the opposition."

Arniel tried some different combinations on Monday, providing opportunities for Gustav Nyquist, Vladislav Namestnikov and Cole Perfetti at various stages of overtime.

Gabe Vilardi was up next to go onto the ice if Tkachuk hadn't buried a pass from Sanderson to secure the extra point for the Senators

"But at the end of the day, I'm going to try to make sure that Scheif, KC, and J-Mo are out there as much as possible," said Arniel. "They have a history of ending games and I thought (they had) two glorious chances last night to finish it."

Arniel was asked if Morgan Barron, who has two goals and an assist during his past three games, would be someone that warrants consideration for three-on-three work in the future, given his combination of size and speed.

"Obviously, he's having a good year," said Arniel. "We haven't had a whole lot of these (overtime games). But (Monday) night, (Arniel was) trying to get Perfetti going. Maybe that's the situation. And it didn't work out, but at the end of the day it's him recognizing that there's still belief and hopefully, he can go out and maybe make a difference. I've got guys looking back at me every time three-on-three starts."

STANLEY IN GOOD COMPANY

Stanley's been praised for his offensive contributions on the secondary scoring side of things, but a further look under the hood shows what he's doing is even more impressive than one might have originally thought.

Stanley is tied with Nino Niederreiter, Alex Iafallo and Namestnikov for fourth place on the team in goals with six.

Since all six of those goals have come at even strength, Stanley finds himself tied for fourth among all defencemen in the NHL in that category with Edmonton Oilers blue-liner Darnell Nurse, going into Tuesday's action.

The only three D-men with more markers at even strength include Cale Makar of the Colorado Avalanche, Zach Werenski of the Columbus Blue Jackets and Jakob Chychrun of the Washington Capitals.

Dominion City product Denton Mateychuk is tied for sixth with five even-strength goals, while Jets alternate captain Josh Morrissey is tied for 11th with four.

SCOUTING THE BLUES

The Jets will be facing a Blues team that figures to be feeling similar tension as it relates to the standings in the Western Conference.

Entering the contest, the Jets hold a one-point edge while holding two games in hand.

The Blues have been led by centre Robert Thomas, who has seven goals and 23 points in 30 games.

Forwards Dylan Holloway (eight goals, 17 points), Jordan Kyrou (eight goals, 16 points) and Jimmy Snuggerud (five goals, 11 points) are among the Blues that are sidelined with injuries right now.

Between the pipes, Winnipegger Joel Hofer is 5-7-2 with a 3.16 goals-against average and .890 save percentage in 18 games (and 15 starts), while Jordan Binnington is off to a slow start and looking to round into form after starting the campaign with a 7-8-5 record, a 3.49 goals-against average and .869 save percentage in 21 games (including 19 starts).

The Jets have banked three of four available points since goalie Connor Hellebuyck returned to the lineup, but they're looking to go into the Christmas break feeling better about their lot in life.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/12/16/perfetti-looking-for-a-st-louis-spark>

Perfetti looking for a St. Louis spark

Jets' forward has yet to return to form since suffering high-ankle sprain

By: Mike McIntyre

ST. LOUIS — Cole Perfetti isn't looking for another Manitoba Miracle. But the struggling Winnipeg Jets winger sure could use a change of fortune after a frustrating run of bad luck and sub-par play.

Perhaps Wednesday's Central Division clash here in Missouri might get him and some of his teammates going. A St. Louis spark, if you will.

It's the first meeting between the Jets and Blues since that magical moment last spring, when Perfetti saved his team's season with a last-second, Game 7 tying goal. Winnipeg went on to win the series thanks to Adam Lowry's overtime heroics.

"It's nice to look back on and it's a very good memory to have," Perfetti said Tuesday when asked by reporters to take a stroll into the past.

It was a short trip.

"We're just looking to go into St. Louis and put a few good games (together) before Christmas," he said, eyes firmly planted on the not-so-rosy present.

"These are massive games for us. We're going in there, obviously they're a divisional opponent, so it's going to be a big game for us. Let's start the trip off on the right foot."

A high-ankle sprain suffered in the final pre-season game delayed the start of Perfetti's season by 14 games. The lingering effects of that injury are still evident as he tries to get back up to speed — figuratively and literally — on a slumping Jets squad that desperately needs him to return to form.

Perfetti, 23, posted a career-high 50 points (18 goals, 32 assists) in 82 regular-season games last year and was hoping to make an even bigger impact this season. Instead, the 10th-overall pick from 2020 has just seven points (2G, 5A) through 18 games since returning, a pace that translates to 32 points (9G, 23A) over a full season.

Which brings us to a pivotal week for a Jets team that sits at 15-15-2 following Monday's 3-2 overtime loss to the Ottawa Senators.

That game was a microcosm of Perfetti's season. There were positives, including several offensive looks and an assist on Neal Pionk's second-period goal.

But there were also moments that left fans and pundits scratching their heads. Most notably, Perfetti was knocked off the puck in the Senators' zone during three-on-three overtime by Tim Stützle — not exactly a bruising power forward — who quickly turned the play the other way, leading to Brady Tkachuk's game-winning goal.

"Every time you're out there, you're trying to make an impact on the game. It was great to get that opportunity, obviously it doesn't go the way you wanted, so it's frustrating in that sense," Perfetti explained when asked about the sequence.

"We outplayed them. It's frustrating to not get the two points, but we'll take what we can get from it, learn from it, look at what we did well, look at our mistakes, clean a few things up and then put it behind us."

Jets head coach Scott Arniel wasn't pointing the finger at Perfetti, perhaps hoping a bit of positive reinforcement might help.

"That's the best game I've seen out of him since he's come back from the injury. He did a lot of things well without the puck, with the puck," he said.

Perfetti does have assists in three of his last four games and believes that's a sign of better days ahead. He's now skating on a line with Nino Niederreiter and Vlad Namestnikov, who is in an even bigger funk with no goals and one assist over his last 20 outings.

"I'm feeling a bit better," said Perfetti.

"The last two games, we've had a lot of chances and a lot of zone time. That's a step in the right direction, with what we're creating. We've had a lot of almost, maybes. With the chances that we've created the last little bit here, the puck is eventually going to go in. It has to. It's going to turn for us and when it does, we've got to be ready to go."

Perfetti wasn't making excuses, but acknowledged the condensed NHL schedule in an Olympic year, along with the resulting lack of practice time, has slowed his recovery.

"It's hard enough to come back from injury, but when you have a crazy schedule and there's travel and not a lot of practice days, it's hard to get back into the five-on-five, playmaking practices," he said.

So is every game.

"We're 32 games in and we're not in a playoff spot right now," Perfetti noted.

St. Louis figures to be ornery after getting thumped 5-2 at home Monday by a struggling Nashville club. The Blues are now 12-15-7, ahead of only Calgary and Vancouver in point percentage. You can bet they'll be eager to exact some revenge for the devastating way their Stanley Cup run ended last spring, too.

"A lot of memories will be brought back when we play St. Louis. But at the end of the day it's a new year, new team, so we just have to worry about one game at a time," said Jets centre Mark Scheifele.

"That was an intense series. It's weird that we haven't played them already. It's almost Christmas and we haven't seen them. It's going to be an interesting road trip. Big games coming up starting with St. Louis. We want to go into the Christmas break feeling good."

On Tuesday, Blues general manager Doug Armstrong met with local media and made it clear significant changes could be coming, lamenting a lack of secondary scoring and a season that has fallen well short of expectations.

Sound familiar, Jets fans?

After St. Louis, Winnipeg heads to Denver to face the league-leading Colorado Avalanche on Friday, before continuing on to Salt Lake City to meet the Utah Mammoth on Sunday. The road hasn't been kind to the Jets lately. They opened the season with four straight road wins but have managed just three victories in their last 11 away from home (3-8-1).

Still, Arniel struck an optimistic tone, much as he did with Perfetti, following a 1-2-1 homestand.

"These last four games, we've faced four really good teams and we kept three of them under 10 five-on-five scoring chances. To me, it went eight, five, and (Monday) night was seven. That's a great start, for me," said Arniel.

"If we recognize that, that's going to help us on the road or at home, it's going to help us to stay in games."

Winnipeg Sun

https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/jets-frustration-level-rising-after-blues-blanking/article_b504a8dd-901a-46d4-a109-132b29d282b6.html

Jets' frustration level rising after Blues blanking

By Paul Friesen

Another slow start, another bout of anemia offensively and a lack of answers marked the Winnipeg Jets' stop in St. Louis on Wednesday.

In their first meeting since last spring's dramatic playoff series, the Jets were blanked, 1-0, continuing down the road of frustration they've been on for the last month.

It marked the second straight game Winnipeg's forwards were shut out, a fatal recipe for a team that gets little secondary scoring.

The score flattered the Jets, as they counted on goalie Connor Hellebuyck to keep it close for his fragile-looking teammates.

"We've been saying that for a while," head coach Scott Arniel told reporters in St. Louis. "That's part of your job. That's what you get paid for. Show up. Do your job. And you know what, we have to do it more consistently, with more bodies and more people.

"It doesn't get any easier."

Kicking off a three-game road trip, this was supposed to be the most likely place for the Jets to collect two points. Their next stop is in Colorado against the league-leading Avalanche.

The loss dropped the Jets to 3-9-2 in their last 14 games, 15-16-2 overall.

It also dropped them further down the standings in the Western Conference, five points outside the playoff line – the furthest they've been all season.

"It's been going on for seems like a long time here, almost a month," forward Kyle Connor said. "It's not the way we want to play, and it just keeps going on. We've got to find a way to get out of it."

Shots were 26-24, St. Louis, as Winnipegger Joel Hofer collected the shutout, his team leapfrogging the Jets with a 13-15-7 mark.

The Jets' offensive zone time was sporadic, their defensive lapses too frequent, their desperation level hard to find until the third period.

"We need to play more like we did that third period," defenceman Dylan Samberg said.

"The other two periods, there were spurts where it'd be five minutes where we were doing the right things," Arniel added. "Five, six minutes, and then all of a sudden, man, we weren't. There were five or six, eight minutes where St. Louis just took the game over. We gave up some rush chances.

"In the first period, we gave up eight chances on one shift."

The Jets started the game exactly how they didn't want to: by taking a penalty, defenceman Logan Stanley nabbed for holding. At least they killed it off this time.

Under siege later in the period, the Jets were bailed out by Hellebuyck and the bars around him, two Blues shots clanging off the iron.

Shots were 9-1, St. Louis, at one point – and that didn't include the two off the post and crossbar.

The Jets emerged from the first 20 minutes unscathed, though.

With the help of a couple of power plays, they eventually evened the shot count at 12.

Both goalies kept shutting the door, particularly Hellebuyck, who stopped Brayden Schenn on a second-period breakaway.

How Schenn got alone behind the Winnipeg defence was just another example of the Jets being too loose defensively.

Another defensive breakdown finally cost the Jets the first goal, Dylan DeMelo's turnover under pressure leading to Justin Faulk's icebreaker.

The Jets survived a Jonathan Toews penalty late in the second to stay within a goal going into the final 20.

Attempting to generate something, Arniel broke up his top line for the third, dropping Gabe Vilardi and bumping up Alex Iafallo.

But his team finished the game like it started, shorthanded – DeMelo called for tripping with 2:54 to go, Stanley taking an extra roughing call during a scrum with 42 seconds left, ending any hope of a repeat of the late-game heroics that saved their playoff series back in May.

"At the end, there's frustration, for sure," Arniel said. "But we got ourselves in a one-goal game on the road and you have to find a way to score goals. We talk about defending and doing the right things. Well, offensively we've got to do the right things as well. And we've got to do it more consistently."

One thing rising is the level of frustration.

"It's just not easy right now going through it," Samberg said. "But we have 49 games left. We're coming to the halfway point of the season. We've got to figure it out here."

https://www.winnipegssun.com/sports/jets-blues-hope-to-rekindle-epic-playoff-vibe-in-st-louis/article_4de24955-b5c8-4b80-b088-8706f49a7b44.html

Jets, Blues, hope to rekindle epic playoff vibe in St. Louis

By Paul Friesen

The Winnipeg Jets aren't the only ones who'll be reminded of what used to be when they take on the Blues in St. Louis tonight.

It's the first clash of these division rivals since their epic, first-round playoff series last spring, won in dramatic fashion by the Jets in double-overtime of Game 7.

Neither team has been the same since, and Blues head coach Jim Montgomery hopes seeing the Jets again rekindles something in his floundering group.

"For our group it means a lot," Montgomery told reporters in St. Louis this morning. "And not because of the outcome of the series. We would have liked to have won Game 7. But more importantly, we were playing a really good brand of hockey. And for a lot of players that brings excitement, to get back to that brand of hockey we were playing."

The Blues are an abysmal 12-15-7 this season, behind even the 15-15-2 Jets.

Both teams had high expectations coming into the year and are failing to live up to them.

"In the NHL the expectations, it's funny how it creates, not only in the dressing room but in the media, your observations of if the team's good or not," Montgomery said. "I don't think anyone last year thought Winnipeg was going to be the Presidents' (Trophy) winner. Maybe a wildcard team, I don't know. Maybe third place. But definitely not win this really tough division.

"And I think this year, coming back, the expectations were, 'We're going to try to get closer to the Stanley Cup.' Not about qualifying for the playoffs."

Montgomery says the same thing has happened with his team, which, like the Jets, sits outside of the playoff picture in the Western Conference.

"We had that good run, and we were as a group, and sometimes in the media, a lot of people thought this will be a playoff team," he said. "And that hasn't transpired for us. Unfortunately that breeds negativity. And I'm not talking externally. Who cares, externally. Internally."

The Blues have won five of their last 10 going into Wednesday, the Jets just three.

Both are in a state of urgency if they want a chance to repeat some of the magic of last spring, when their back-and-forth playoff series was widely considered one of the best of the entire post-season.

"It was old-school hockey, it was mean, it was hard, it was vicious," is how Montgomery described it. "And in the end you had two teams that really competed and emptied the tanks so much that the handshake line was what you want in Stanley Cup Playoffs."

His counterpart with the Jets doesn't disagree.

"It really was an extremely entertaining, physical, exciting series," Scott Arniel said. "And both teams right now are trying to find their games. I would probably say the same thing. I'm hoping this is one that helps spark us, as well. They usually bring out the best in us, whether it's here or in our rink."

As physical as this matchup could be, Arniel wants to see his team cut down on the time it's spent in the sin bin of late.

"Not taking penalties would be a big one, especially in the first five minutes like we've done in the last four," he said.

The game features another matchup of the Schenn brothers: Jets defenceman Luke Schenn and Blues captain Brayden.

"We don't take these opportunities for granted," Luke said.

Family sentiment gets pushed aside, though, once the puck drops and two critical points are up for grabs.

"There's a lot of pressure on both teams after what happened last year to do well," the Jets defenceman said. "Saying that, it's still early enough in the season where if you get on a run you can turn things around. But there's such parity in the league that you can't sit around and wait."

https://www.winnipegssun.com/sports/jets-need-points-not-a-miracle-vs-blues/article_847cc05e-704d-4f3d-a290-147849510739.html

Jets need points, not a miracle, vs. Blues

By Paul Friesen

The last time the Winnipeg Jets played St. Louis they created the most memorable playoff moment in franchise history.

The Jets don't need anything quite that dramatic as they kick off a three-game road trip against the Blues on Wednesday, but they could sure use a win against one of the teams below them in the Central Division.

"These are massive games for us," forward Cole Perfetti said on Tuesday. "Let's start the trip off on the right foot."

Squaring off against the Blues will rekindle memories of last season's dramatic Game 7, first-round playoff win dubbed the Manitoba Miracle: Perfetti's game-tying goal with three seconds left, Adam Lowry's winner in double overtime.

But that'll feel like ancient history if the Jets go from the Presidents' Trophy winner last season to a non-playoff team.

The playoff line was three points away as the Jets boarded their flight to St. Louis. Their chances of making up some ground won't get any easier than in the first game of this trip.

The Blues have won just 12 of 34 games and aren't far from the bottom of the Western Conference.

On the horizon for Friday are the NHL's high-flying Colorado Avalanche, followed by a Sunday date in Utah, one of the teams between the Jets and a wildcard spot.

"It's weird that we haven't played them already," Mark Scheifele said of Wednesday's opponent. "It's almost Christmas and we haven't seen them. We haven't seen Colorado either. It's going to be an interesting road trip. We want to go into the Christmas break feeling good."

The Jets are coming off Monday's 3-2 overtime loss, at home, to Ottawa, capping a 1-2-1 homestand in which they failed to generate the momentum they'd hoped to.

At 15-15-2, they're 13 points off the pace they set last season.

One of the reasons for the big step back: a lack of secondary scoring.

Where Perfetti was well on his way to an 18-goal, 50-point campaign a year ago, he has just two goals and five assists in 18 games this season.

He's just one example of a top-heavy roster that has three players, Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Gabe Vilardi, with at least 15 goals and the rest all less than 10.

Head coach Scott Arniel likes the way Perfetti is trending, at least.

"I mentioned to him this morning, that's the best game I've seen out of him since he's come back from the injury," Arniel said of Perfetti's play against Ottawa. "He did a lot of things well without the puck, with the puck. There was some real good zone cycle time. I know there wasn't a goal there but... just keep building off of that."

Perfetti says he and linemates Vlad Namestnikov and Nino Niederreiter plan to do just that.

He and Niederreiter have gone eight games without a goal, Namestnikov a whopping 20.

"The last two games, we've had a lot of chances and a lot of zone time," Perfetti said. "That's a step in the right direction, with what we're creating. We've had a lot of almost maybes. We're going to take that good feeling that we had last night into St. Louis tomorrow and hopefully, we can find the back of the net as a line and help the team out in that way."

"With the chances that we've created the last little bit here, the puck is eventually going to go in. It has to."

Much like his team has to start collecting points, or the uphill climb to a playoff spot will only get steeper.

"Every game has a certain level of urgency," Perfetti said. "Everything matters. It's huge right now."