

## **WinnipegJets.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/jets-run-into-hot-saros-in-4-3-shootout-loss>

### ***Jets run into hot Saros in 4-3 shootout loss Kyle Connor had three assists, Saros made 36 saves***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – Ryan O'Reilly scored the shootout winner to lift the Nashville Predators over the Winnipeg Jets 4-3 at Canada Life Centre. The Jets fall two points back of the Preds in the standings and could not solve Juuse Saros to win the game in regulation. Josh Morrissey, Gabriel Vilardi and Jonathan Toews scored for the Jets, Kyle Connor had three assists for his 55th career three-point game. Winnipeg will head out on the road for three games out east starting Thursday in Boston.

#### ***POWER PLAY CLICKS***

Coming into Tuesday night, the Jets were 1-14 on the power play during the first seven games of this homestand. Head coach Scott Arniel was asked about what he wanted to see from his power play tonight against Nashville.

"We're trying to look at the positive side. Are you wearing out the opposition by spending time in their end or are you just getting worn out going up and down the ice trying to break out," said Arniel following the Jets morning skate.

"It's a good challenge against a Nashville team that's extremely aggressive. We'll have to be sharp and hopefully we can break through on them."

After going 0-1 in the first period, the Jets broke through in the second to give them their first lead of the night. The Jets finished the night 1-for-4 on the man advantage but created enough chances to be happy with the effort.

#### ***LOCAL MAN TIES IT LATE***

With the Jets trailing in the third period and Connor Hellebuyck on the bench for an extra attacker, Mark Scheifele spotted Jonathan Toews alone in front of the Preds net and Toews one timed home his 8th of the season at 18:59. For the Winnipeg product, it was his first goal since January 15 and in the process got the Jets to overtime.

"It's nice to score in a situation like that. Going down the stretch, you're going to be in some tight games," said Toews.

"So, it's nice to have some confidence when you go out there, whether it's a power play or a six-man unit to score one late and get back in a game like that."

#### ***SOLID HOMESTAND***

The Jets had to come back from a goal down twice on the night and arguably had their best offensive effort of the homestand. Winnipeg had 39 shots but couldn't solve Saros in key situations but in the end, they finished the homestand 5-2-1 and played some pretty good hockey for the majority of it.

"Yeah, I think it very well could have, could have, should have been 6-2. But yeah, I think that we talked about the importance of this, because it could have went the other way," said head coach Scott Arniel.

"And we could have said, 'All right, we're done.' I think this just continues to give us hope and that it gives us sort of something to continue to build off."

## **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/nashville-predators-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-march-17-2026>

### ***Saros stops 36, helps Predators recover for shootout win against Jets Forsberg has goal, assist for Nashville; Toews ties it with 1:01 remaining in 3rd for Winnipeg***

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Juuse Saros made 36 saves before stopping all three attempts he faced in the shootout for the Nashville Predators, who recovered for a 4-3 win against the Winnipeg Jets at Canada Life Centre on Tuesday.

"I thought he was really good," Nashville coach Andrew Brunette said. "Obviously, he's good every night. I thought both goalies were good. I know the shots were maybe a little over exaggerated a bit, but I thought both goalies made saves and I thought we had some really good looks too."

Filip Forsberg had a goal and an assist, Matthew Wood and Erik Haula scored, and Jonathan Marchessault had two assists for the Predators (30-28-9), who have points in three of their past four (2-1-1) and finished their five game road trip 2-2-1.

"With us giving up a late goal, we came back in overtime. We didn't pull our heads down, we played even better," Brunette said. "So, credit to the group. They stuck together and they rose up to the challenges. And obviously, (Saros) making the saves in the shootout, and factor in a beautiful goal (from Ryan O'Reilly in the shootout)."

Kyle Connor had three assists, Gabriel Vilardi had a goal and an assist, and Connor Hellebuyck made 20 saves for the Jets (28-28-11), who have lost three of five (2-2-1).

"We had 70 to 80 shot attempts. Their goaltender was outstanding," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "In that second period, some shots he (Saros) didn't see. We hit a couple of crossbars and posts, and missed the net a few times. We had tons of opportunities and Saros made some big stops."

Haula gave the Predators a 1-0 lead at 13:02 of the first period, tipping Roman Josi's point shot as he screened Hellebuyck on the power play.

"Last game of a road trip and it's a big one for us, and fun," Wood said. "Those games are fun to play in, close games, meaningful games. So it was fun to come out with the two points."

Josh Morrissey tied it 1-1 at 19:20. After Morrissey chipped it deep into the Nashville zone, Vilardi pulled it off the end boards and found Morrissey alone in the slot.

Vilardi put the Jets in front 2-1 at 5:09 of the second period. Connor backhanded a pass in front to Cole Perfetti for a shot, and Vilardi banged in the rebound on the power play.

“We had a lot of shots, we had a lot of opportunities to score,” Vilardi said. “I thought we did a good job with our O-zone play, getting pucks to the 'D.' Guys were moving, (we) had a guy in front a lot of the time.”

Forsberg tied it 2-2 at 10:48, scoring from a sharp angle with a one-timer from the bottom of the left circle just under the crossbar.

“I'm proud of the group, it was a tough game,” Brunette said. “They're a desperate team. We're a desperate team. I thought it was a good hockey game. I thought we handled the momentum swings really good, even from a little bit of the second period where they pushed.”

Wood gave the Predators a 3-2 lead at 14:01 of the third period, pulling the puck away from Morrissey and lifting it over Hellebuyck's glove from below the right dot.

“It was a great play by (Forsberg and Marchessault),” Wood said. “I was just kind of able to put it in. It was a big win for the team.”

Forsberg said: “I think (Wood) has been playing with a lot of confidence up the middle. He's using his size and his speed up the middle, gets a little bit more involved, I think. And great shot (on his goal), obviously. It's the stuff that we see in practice all the time. So, it's been fun watching him.”

Jonathan Toews tied it 3-3 at 18:59 with Hellebuyck pulled for the extra attacker. Mark Scheifele set Toews up at the edge of the slot, where he scored with a snap shot.

“It's nice to score in a situation like that,” Toews said. “Going down the stretch, you're going to be in some tight games, so it's nice to have some confidence when you go out there, whether it's a power play or a six-man unit to score one late and get back in a game like that.”

*NOTES:* O'Reilly scored his 16th career shootout-deciding goal, tying both Phil Kessel and Alex Ovechkin for 10th most in NHL history. ... Wood has five goals in his past six games. ... Connor recorded his 55th career three-point game, passing both Ilya Kovalchuk and Blake Wheeler for the second-most in Jets/Atlanta Thrashers history. Scheifele is first with 80.

## **Canadian Press**

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2026/03/18/winnipeg-jets-nashville-predators-game-shootout-loss/>

### ***Jets Forced Lone Referee to Work Overtime, Lose 4-3 in Shootout to Predators***

By Jeff Hamilton, The Canadian Press

The Winnipeg Jets and Nashville Predators had a lot of ice to cover at Canada Life Centre on Tuesday night.

So did the lone man in stripes.

When veteran NHL referee Chris Lee was unable to make it to Winnipeg owing to weather and travel issues, the game was played under a rare emergency protocol, with just one referee and two linesmen.

Jets head coach Scott Arniel said he got the heads-up from general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff hours before puck drop.

“Chris Lee got stuck with the weather and couldn’t get in, so we knew it was coming,” Arniel said following the Jets’ 4-3 shootout loss. “I just told our team, just before the game, that it’s going to be a three-man referee situation, let’s not get all bent out of shape if a call gets missed or anything happens. They’re going to try and be at their best.”

That left referee Brandon Schrader tasked with calling a fast-paced, physical Central Division clash by himself — an exhausting end-to-end marathon that hasn’t been the NHL standard in more than two decades, when they used to routinely run with a one-man referee system.

The NHL started transitioning to the two-referee system during the 1998-99 season. The league implemented the change gradually over two seasons, before officially requiring two referees for every game beginning in the 2000-01 season.

Operating without a partner creates significant blind spots, particularly with play away from the puck. While linesmen take care of icings, offsides, and too-many-men penalties, they’re limited in what else they can do, including calling any other type of minor infractions.

Despite the potential for the game to turn into a clutch-and-grab affair, the chaos was kept to a minimum.

“At the end of the day, you saw him, he had to do a lot of skating, from end to end, and he did a good job,” Arniel said of Schrader’s solo effort. “We did talk at the beginning. I think both benches were pretty good (at not taking advantage). There were a few more opportunities for penalties to be called, but at the end of the day, I think you just respect the fact there’s just one guy there.”

Jets forward Gabriel Vilardi echoed his coach’s sympathy for the physical toll the solo assignment demanded.

“Yeah, it’s tough for him. It’s not really an adjustment for us but it’s a hard job for him,” Vilardi said. “He’s got to skate a lot more. You got guys yelling at you all the time so I kind of feel for him. I thought he did a good job. No real adjustments for players ... maybe just try to be nicer to the guy.”

When asked if players felt they could get away with more rough stuff behind the play, Vilardi shrugged it off. After all, Winnipeg had four power plays, compared to Nashville’s one.

“Yeah, maybe, I don’t know,” Vilardi said. “But we had four power plays, so I don’t know.”

The Jets capitalized one of those man-advantages, with Vilardi scoring in the second period to snap a dismal 1-for-14 slump in the previous seven games on the team’s homestand.

Winnipeg managed to salvage a point when Jonathan Toews scored with 1:01 remaining in regulation to force overtime. But after a scoreless extra frame where the Jets outshot the Predators 4-2, Ryan O'Reilly scored the lone goal in the shootout to seal the game for Nashville.

The Jets finished their eight-game homestand with a 5-2-1 record.

"I think it could have been, should have been 6-2-0," Arniel said. "We talked about the importance of it because this could have went the other way and we could have said, 'we are done.'

"I think this continues to give us hope and something to continue to build off. At the end of the day, I liked the fact we did a lot of good things through this homestand."

*NOTES:* Toews' game-tying goal was his eighth marker of the season. ... Josh Morrissey scored his 12th goal of the year and his 418th career point. ... Kyle Connor registered three assists, extending his point streak to four games, with three goals and four assists for seven points. ... Predators goaltender Juuse Saros added to his reputation as the busiest goalie in the NHL, adding to his league-leading totals in shots faced (1,454) and saves made (1,301), across 51 appearances. ... With the win, the Predators (30-28-9) are two points up on the Jets (28-28-11) in the Western Conference standings, with both clubs chasing a playoff spot.

## **Global Winnipeg**

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11735534/winnipeg-jets-rally-late-before-falling-to-nashville-4-3-in-shootout/>

### ***Winnipeg Jets rally late before falling to Nashville 4-3 in shootout***

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

The good news for the Winnipeg Jets is that they were able to secure a single point Tuesday night thanks to a 4-3 shootout loss to the Nashville Predators.

The problem is, the Predators are ahead of the Jets in the standings and as a result were able to make up more ground than Winnipeg in the wild card race.

The Predators scored the go-ahead goal with six minutes left to break a 2-2 deadlock before Jonathan Toews tied the game with the goalie pulled with just a minute to go, but the Jets were stopped on all three attempts in the shootout to end their brief two-game win streak in the finale to the eight-game homestand.

"It was a big game," said Jets forward Gabriel Vilardi. "It's frustrating. We had a lot of good opportunities to score, but we lost."

In their third game in just four days, the Jets had a ton of scoring chances and controlled the play for much of the contest. They outshot the Predators in all three periods and in overtime as the shots finished 39-23.

"We had 70-80 shot attempts," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. "Their goaltender was outstanding. I mean, that second period, some he saw, some he didn't see, some we hit a

couple crossbars and posts, and missed the net a few times. We had tons of opportunities and (Juuse) Saros made some big stops.”

The Jets now have just a 1-3 record in shootout games this season.

Toews, Vilardi, and Josh Morrissey had the markers for the Jets, while Kyle Connor registered three assists.

Toews’ third period goal ended a 20-game goalless drought.

“It’s nice to score in a situation like that,” said Toews. “I think going down the stretch you’re gonna be in some tight games. So, it’s nice to have some confidence when you go out there and whether it’s a power play or six-man unit to score one late and get back in the game like that.”

The game was played with only referee due to travel issues.

“I just told our team just before the game that look it, it’s gonna be a three-man referee situation,” Arniel said. “Let’s not get all bent out of shape if a call gets missed or anything happens.”

The single point leaves the Jets four points out of the final playoff spot pending the outcome of a late game between Seattle and Tampa Bay.

The Jets were attempting to sweep the season series with the Predators for the first time since moving to Winnipeg after winning their first two meetings.

Not much happened for the first eleven minutes or so, with just four shots on goal and an almost eight-minute stretch without a whistle.

Nashville earned the game’s first power play at the 11:14 mark when Dylan DeMelo took a tripping penalty, and they eventually made the Jets pay.

The Predators didn’t have a lot going on the power play but just seconds before DeMelo was to step out of the box, Roman Josi sent a wrist shot on net from the point that deflected off Erik Haula and past Connor Hellebuyck to open the scoring.

Winnipeg failed on its first power play look a few minutes later, but in the final minute of the period, they leveled the playing field.

Morrissey started the play by dumping the puck into the Nashville zone from just outside the left point. The puck rimmed around the boards to the right wing where Brady Skjei wasn’t able to handle it, allowing Connor to poke it down low for Vilardi.

Vilardi collected the puck and noticed Morrissey wide-open in the slot, so he fed the star defenceman who was able to beat Saros glove-side for his 12th goal of the season with 40 seconds remaining in the first.

The Jets outshot the Predators 14-7 in the first thanks to a late flurry of shots. The margin was 11-0 over the final six minutes of the period.

Nashville took their second minor penalty of the night 4:59 into the middle frame and it took the Jets all of ten seconds to capitalize.

After Winnipeg won the ensuing faceoff, Connor carried the puck below the goal line and centred it for Cole Perfetti in front of the net. Perfetti wasn't able to get much of a shot off, but the puck rolled to Vilardi at the other side of the crease where he was able to put it into a fairly open net for his 26th of the season at the 5:09 mark.

The Jets continued to dominate play, outshooting the Preds and controlling the puck for most of the first half of the second period but Nashville was able to even the score at the 10:48 mark.

They broke the puck up the ice from below their goal line, with Matthew Wood sending it to Ryan Ufko at their blue line before Ufko rifled a long pass to Jonathan Marchessault in the neutral zone. He carried it slowly into the Winnipeg zone and delayed before dropping a pass to his left that Filip Forsberg one-timed from a tough angle and beat Hellebuyck high to make it 2-2.

Winnipeg got one more look on the power play before the period expired but did nothing with it as the scored stayed 2-2 heading to the third. The Jets outshot Nashville 11-8 in the second.

The Jets were also handed the first power play of the third period and while it was more productive than their look late in the second, it still failed to produce a goal.

Neither team generated a ton of dangerous looks before Nashville regained the lead with just under six minutes to go.

The play began innocuously with Forsberg floating the puck down the ice. Morrissey mishandled it at his own blueline as he backpedaled into his own zone, giving Marchessault a chance to take it away and drop it to Matthew Wood. Wood skated deep into the Jets' end before chipping a shot over the shoulder of Hellebuyck.

Hellebuyck went to the bench for an extra attacker with 1:38 left on the clock and with 1:01 to go, Toews had his biggest moment as a Jet.

Steven Stamkos had his stick break during a puck battle and quickly went to the Nashville bench to get a new one. As that happened, the Jets cycled the puck to the other side of the ice with Toews sending it to Mark Scheifele who walked in and fired a shot that was stopped by Saros.

But off the ensuing scramble, the puck came to Scheifele in the corner. He corralled it before passing it to Toews for a one-timer from the faceoff dot that beat Saros to tie the game.

It was Toews' first goal since Jan. 15, the final game of a four-game goal streak he had going at the time.

The teams took turns with possession in overtime but neither team could solve the puzzle, leading to a shootout.

Vilardi was denied on Winnipeg's first attempt before Ryan O'Reilly scored for Nashville.

Both Scheifele and Forsberg missed, putting all the pressure on Connor who rang his shot off the post to end the game.

Saros was excellent in net for the Predators, stopping 36 of 39 shots while Hellebuyck turned aside 20 of 23 in defeat.

The Jets finish this season-long eight-game homestand with a 5-2-1 record and will now embark on a three-game road trip that begins in Boston on Thursday. Pregame coverage on 680 CJOB will begin just after 4 p.m. with the puck dropping shortly after 6 p.m.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11735911/analysis-no-luck-winnipeg-jets-st-patricks-day/>

### ***ANALYSIS: No luck of the Irish for Winnipeg Jets on St. Patrick's Day***

By Paul Edmonds CJOB

It was St. Patrick's Day Tuesday, as you know, but it would be difficult to suggest that a lot of Irish eyes were smiling on the Winnipeg Jets that night.

In a crucial contest that concluded a season-high, eight-game homestand against the team – the Nashville Predators – just above them in the standings, the Jets suffered their 11th extra time loss and slipped one point further back of fifth in their division.

Now of course, the out-of-town scoreboard was a little more kind and the Jets actually made up ground on Seattle – the team they're currently chasing for the final wild card berth in the Western Conference and now sit four points back of.

But for a club that is as close to must-win territory every night, not securing the extra point and dropping a one-goal decision at home was another staggering body blow, especially since they hit three goalposts in the game, including when Kyle Connor cracked the bar to end it in a shootout.

As a result, instead of being just two wins away from a playoff spot, by not gaining the additional point on Tuesday, they're now three wins away. In other words to eliminate tie-breaker scenarios, the Jets will need to make up three more wins on those ahead of them in the standings.

And with only 15 games remaining on their regular-season schedule and 10 of those on the road starting Thursday, their sprinter's kick to the finish line will be anything but linear.

But to their credit, the Jets have been on this type of path since mid-January and if they're able to piece together a solid road trip out east starting, ironically, just a few days removed from St. Patrick's Day in Boston of all places, then perhaps with a little luck, the Jets might actually find those Irish eyes smiling on them after all.

**TSN.ca**

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/2026/03/18/saros-the-difference-as-predators-deliver-dent-to-winnipeg-playoff-hopes/>

***Saros the difference as Predators deliver dent to Winnipeg's playoff hopes (VIDEO)***

The Predators edged the Jets in a shootout on Tuesday night for a crucial victory that creates a two-point gap between the two teams. Craig Button joins SportsCentre to break down the close clash between the Central Division rivals, and assess Winnipeg's chances of making a run in the playoffs.

**Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/03/17/saros-steals-point-for-preds>

***Saros steals point for Preds  
Jets get dumped by Nashville in shootout***

By: Mike McIntyre

The Winnipeg Jets' perilous playoff hopes are really hanging by a thread now.

A 4-3 shootout loss to the Nashville Predators on Tuesday night at Canada Life Centre is going to sting for several reasons.

First, you could make a legitimate argument the Jets deserved better. They outshot the visitors by a 39-23 margin, generated 22 high-danger chances while allowing just eight and were, by most measurable metrics, the superior team on the night.

Second, the Jets rallied to tie the game with exactly one minute left in regulation and carried that momentum into three-on-three overtime. They had multiple glorious chances but were unable to beat Predators goaltender Juuse Saros.

Third — and most importantly — Nashville is one of the teams Winnipeg must leapfrog to secure the final Western Conference wild-card spot. The Jets began the night one point back of the Predators with a chance to put them in the rear-view mirror. Now, that deficit has doubled.

Add it all up, and this was a tough one to swallow, even as the Jets closed out a season-long eight-game homestand with a 5-2-1 record.

"We've been winning and picking up points, so it's been pretty good," said forward Gabe Vilardi.

"You know, we got to keep going though. Every game's playoff mode right now for us. That's the position we put ourselves in because of our earlier in the season trouble. Right now we're in playoff mode obviously, and we got to preferably get two points but what are you going to do?"

Winnipeg is now 28-28-11, leaving them temporarily four points back of Seattle and Los Angeles for the final playoff spot, and three behind San Jose. However, the Kraken were still playing the Tampa Bay Lightning at press time, meaning that gap could grow.

Nashville improves to 30-28-9 and were, at least for the time being, within two points of the Kraken and the Kings.

### *Getting goalied*

Tip your cap to Saros.

Consider this: According to Natural Stat Trick, the Jets were expected to score 5.26 goals in this game based on the quality of their overall chances. That means Saros stopped 2.26 above average.

“We had 70 to 80 shot attempts. Their goaltender was outstanding,” said Jets coach Scott Arniel.

“In that second period, some shots he didn’t see. We hit a couple of crossbars and posts and missed the net a few times. We had tons of opportunities and Saros made some big stops.”

He really had no chance on the three goals that beat him.

The first came off the stick of defenceman Josh Morrissey with 40 seconds left in the first period, tying the game 1-1. Vilardi found his teammate all alone in the slot, and Morrissey ripped a shot past Saros for his 12th of the year.

Vilardi gave the Jets a 2-1 lead early in the second period when he pounced on a loose puck in front of the net with his team on the power play. His 26th of the year is just one short of the career high he set last season.

Jonathan Toews scored his eighth of the season — snapping a 20-game drought in the process — with Connor Hellebuyck out for the extra attacker. His shot from in tight beat a screened Saros.

“It’s nice to score in a situation like that,” said Toews.

“Going down the stretch, you’re going to be in some tight games. So it’s nice to have some confidence when you go out there, whether it’s a power play or a six-man unit to score one late and get back in a game like that.”

Saros stopped all four shots he faced in overtime, then had a clean sheet during the shootout.

“A lot of shots, a lot of opportunities to score,” said Vilardi. “I thought we did a good job with our O-zone play, getting pucks to the D. Guys were moving, had a guy in front a lot of the time. Yeah, we had a lot of chances.”

Meanwhile, Hellebuyck wasn’t at his best in this game. Nashville had an expected goals rate of 2.02, meaning they outscored their chances.

Hellebuyck had no chance on Eric Haula’s perfect power play tip to open the scoring, but he’d probably say he could have stopped Filip Forsberg’s wicked wrister midway through the second which tied the game 2-2, and he definitely would want Matthew Wood’s 3-2 go-ahead goal back that came with just under six minutes left in regulation.

Ryan O’Reilly then scored the only goal of the shootout.

“We’ve proven that it doesn’t matter who our opponent is, we can find ways to win games, especially when the points are big for both teams,” said Toews.

“Unfortunately, we didn’t find a way to get the second one, but we’re showing that resolve. It’s not always going to be pretty. We’ve just got to find ways and we believe that we’ve got the guys to be able to do that.”

### *Stranded stripes*

The game had a bit of an unusual feel as it was officiated by just one referee.

Chris Lee was unable to make it from Minneapolis to Winnipeg due to weather, so Brandon Schrader really got his cardio in as he had to cover both ends of the ice.

Schrader whistled Nashville for four minor penalties, and the Jets were only able to convert once. That’s been an issue lately for the club, which went just 2-for-18 on the power play during this eight-game homestand.

“Special teams can be difference makers,” Morrissey said following the morning skate. “We have done a lot of good things but we have another gear as a group.”

Winnipeg took one penalty, which the Predators were able to score on.

### *Key play*

Jonathan Toews game-tying goal with 60 seconds left in the third period at least salvaged something for the Jets.

### *THREE STARS:*

1. NSH G Juuse Saros: 36 saves
2. WPG LW Kyle Connor: 3 assists
3. WPG RW Gabe Vilardi: 1 goal, 1 assist

### *Extra, extra*

A crowd of 13,559 — one of the smallest of the season — took in the game.

Winnipeg went 2-0-1 against Nashville in their season series.

Ville Heinola was once again the lone healthy scratch for the Jets.

The club is likely to call up a forward from the Manitoba Moose on Wednesday as they head out on a three-game road trip which begins Thursday in Boston.

They’ll also face the Pittsburgh Penguins and the New York Rangers in a pair of weekend matinees.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/2026/03/17/morrissey-excited-for-possible-hockey-homecoming>

## ***Morrissey excited for possible hockey homecoming***

By: Mike McIntyre

Josh Morrissey's eyes lit up as soon as the subject was mentioned.

The World Cup of Hockey is returning in 2028 — and one of the hosts just happens to be the hometown of the decorated Winnipeg Jets defenceman, who already has a 4 Nations Face-Off and Olympics on his international resume.

Calgary and Prague, Czech Republic will co-host the round-robin portion of the eight-nation tournament, with the action shifting to Edmonton for the two semifinal games and the final.

“Obviously, being from Calgary it's cool that it is going to be there. A lot of excitement in the city, with the new arena being built,” Morrissey said Tuesday.

“On an individual level, how cool would it be to play in that event. Definitely an exciting announcement. It's going to be a great event.”

It almost feels like the hockey universe owes this one to Morrissey. He missed the 4 Nations final with illness, then was knocked out of the Olympics after one period of action with an upper-body injury.

Third time the charm?

“I think that with the way it went at the Olympics for me personally,” said Morrissey.

He will be on the cusp of turning 33 in February 2028, and 35 when the 2030 Olympics come around in the French Alps.

“Hoping to keep playing at an elite level for my team but to also have a chance at a World Cup. Hopefully I am still at an elite level and improving and have another chance at the Olympics,” said Morrissey, who had 45 points (11G, 34A) in 61 games prior to facing the Predators.

“There is lots of goals externally like that but right now I am focused on (Tuesday's) game and being at my best.”

The NHL and NHLPA have not yet revealed which eight countries will participate.

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Is Mark Scheifele getting better with age?

The numbers suggest he is, with the 33-year-old already establishing a new career high in assists and on the cusp of shattering his season-best in points, too.

It helps to have the yin to his yang in Kyle Connor, who is also putting up huge numbers and recently eclipsed the 30-goal mark for the eighth time.

You get the sense these two long-time linemates and good friends are pushing each other — while also dragging the rest of their team into battle.

“They’re both fantastic players. They’ve both been incredible for a long time and consistent,” said Morrissey.

“The statistical numbers that they’ve put up every year, that element of consistency along with the greatness that they show night in and night out is super impressive. This season they’ve really been leading the charge on the offensive side and the all-around game, and definitely we lean heavily on those guys to be great, and they have been.”

“They’ve been difference makers and outstanding all season and excited to watch them down the stretch here.”

Alex Iafallo currently finds himself playing on a line with Scheifele and Connor and admits there’s plenty of “pinch me” moments that come with such an assignment.

“Just unbelievable up and down the ice, the control they have,” said Iafallo.

“Offensively how they get to the net, two on twos, three on twos, stuff like that. It’s huge for our team. Pushing to that next level, I think is the biggest thing. And you can see it the last few games. You know everybody’s going behind them, and they’re the leaders and leading the charge.”

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Scott Arniel knows exactly when — and why — his team’s fortunes began to change for the better.

That would be the aftermath of the Olympic break, which allowed the Jets to have a week of training camp-style practices.

“We had to reset. And it’s put us in this position here where we’re still in the race,” he said prior to Tuesday’s game against the Nashville Predators.

“There are some areas that we changed, that we tinkered with. Whether it was our d-zone coverage, whether it was our forecheck. I won’t get into them all, but there were areas where we tinkered with things. We went through everything – breakouts with the puck, all the stuff without the puck, specialty teams, six on five, five on six, all that stuff.”

Arniel said one of the keys was having seven straight days of small-area games which pitted players against each other and ultimately came down to the wire.

“At the end it came down to a 3-3 tie and the last day was game No. 7. So it actually worked out great. It actually kept our competitive side up,” said Arniel.

“We talked about the practices being extremely competitive. It wasn’t just skate around. It was hard. It was trying to get us prepared for what was coming, which is the hard time of year, next to the playoffs. This stretch, from the Olympic break to the end of the season.”

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There was a noticeable uptick in volume at Tuesday's morning skate — and it didn't take long to realize why.

Neal Pionk was on the ice, wearing a yellow non-contact sweater as he works his way back from a lower-body injury that has sidelined him since Jan. 13.

"The guys were lively. He brings a lot of energy. It is fun to have him back out there again," said Morrissey.

It sounds like Pionk won't need much longer to ramp up.

"He's coming on the road trip. He'll be getting into contact here. That's the next step for him," said Arniel. "Getting real close. I'm not making any promises on the road trip, but he's coming on the trip to get into contact."

As for Winnipeg's three other injured players — veteran forwards Vlad Namestnikov and Nino Niederreiter and defenceman Colin Miller — there's not much news.

"Millsy had to take a little bit of a reset. Not back on the ice yet," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

"The other two are up and running. They've been kind of doing one on, one off, or two on, two off scenario. Just want to make sure the wear and tear isn't getting them. We'll see when we get back from the trip."

## **Winnipeg Sun**

[https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/jets-lose-ground-to-the-predators-in-a-4-3-shootout-loss/article\\_37fb92db-3bd1-4aaf-9187-f590ff5f9f43.html](https://www.winnipegsun.com/sports/jets-lose-ground-to-the-predators-in-a-4-3-shootout-loss/article_37fb92db-3bd1-4aaf-9187-f590ff5f9f43.html)

### ***Jets lose ground to the Predators in a 4-3 shootout loss***

By Gordon Anderson

The homestand was very good, but maybe not good enough.

"I think it could have been, we should have (won six of eight games)," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said after a 4-3 shootout loss to the Nashville Predators on Tuesday night. "We talked about the importance of it because this could have went the other way and we could have said, 'we are done.' I think this continues to give us hope and something to continue to build off. Now, we have a tough road trip in some tough buildings. I liked the fact we did a lot of good things through his homestand."

The Jets had a chance to move ahead of Nashville in the Western Conference wildcard chase with a regulation win, but instead are now two points in arrears of the Predators with 15 games remaining in the season.

"That's all we have to look at, is that one point won," Arniel said. "We got one. I know it's Nashville, and they're now up on us by two. Again, it's just finding a way. Keep staying in all these games."

The Jets finished their eight-game homestand with a 5-2-1 record.

Ryan O'Reilly netted the shootout winner. He scored on Nashville's first chance. After Gabe Vilardi and Mark Scheifele failed to score, Kyle Connor beat Juuse Saros but not the right post. Filip Forsberg also missed for Nashville.

After the Predators took a 3-2 lead at 14:10 of the third period on a Matthew Wood goal, the Jets tied the game at 18:59 when Jonathan Toews found the short side on Saros with a shot from the right face-off circle for his seventh of the season. Toews' goal snapped a 20-game goalless drought.

"It's nice to score in a situation like that," Toews said. "Going down the stretch, you're going to be in some tight games. So, it's nice to have some confidence when you go out there, whether it's a power play or a six-man unit to score one late and get back in a game like that."

The point moves the Jets to within four points of the Seattle Kraken for the final wildcard spot in the Western Conference, as Seattle lost to Tampa Bay, late Tuesday.

Josh Morrissey and Vilardi scored for the Jets (28-28-11) in regulation. Connor Hellebuyck (17-18-10) stopped 20 of 23 shots in regulation and overtime.

Erik Haula and Forsberg scored for Nashville (30-28-9) in regulation. Saros (24-19-7) stopped 36 of 39 in 65 minutes of action.

The Jets are in Boston on Thursday night to play the Bruins.

#### *Ice Chips*

Vlad Namestnikov and Ville Heinola were scratched.

#### *Down a man*

In a black-and-white stripes sense, the game was a throwback to yesteryear as referee Chris Lee was not able to reach Winnipeg due to weather-related issues in Minneapolis. Brandon Schrader handled the duties as the solo referee.

The NHL implemented the two-referee system on a trial basis at the start of the 1998-99 season. Following successful trials and its use in the '99 playoffs, the league made the two-referee system permanent for all games starting in the 2000-01.

#### *Brakes n the skid*

Coming into the finale of the homestand, the Jets had scored one power-play goal on 14 chances. The Jets missed their first opportunity on Tuesday but did convert with their second when Vilardi scored his 26th on a rebound to the left of Saros. Vilardi leads the Jets in power-play goals with 10. The Kingston, Ont., native is one goal away from his career-high, set last season.

Arniel suggested some of the missed chances over the homestand were just poor puck luck as much as a great goaltender. On Tuesday, it was the latter.

"We had a few looks tonight," Arniel said. "There are a couple there, again, even on the power play, where Saros made some big stops on. To get rewarded – because we did have, as much as we didn't score, we were creating good chances and opportunities."

The Jets finished the homestand with two powerplay goals on 18 chances, going 1–for-4 on Tuesday.

### *High and tight*

Two of Nashville's goals fall under the category of 'I would like those back.'

With the Jets leading 2-1 in the second period, Forsberg's shot from near the face-off dot in the right circle beat Hellebuyck over the right shoulder at 10:48. Wood's marker at 14:01 of the third beat Hellebuyck to the short side over the left shoulder. The shot came inside the left face-off circle. Perhaps the shot was deflected by Dylan DeMelo's stick on its way to the roof of the net.

### *Plenty of chances to win*

The analytics site Natural Stat Trick had the Jets favoured in high danger chances at 22-8 in all situations. The Jets led in expected goals in all situations at 5.26 to Nashville's 2.02.

"We had 70 to 80 shot attempts," Arniel said. "Their goaltender was outstanding. In that second period, some shots he didn't see. We hit a couple of crossbars and posts and missed the net a few times. We had tons of opportunities and Saros made some big stops."

[https://www.winnipeg.sun.com/sports/we-cant-go-back-morrissey-and-the-jets-moving-forward/article\\_d98197de-235f-4b21-881f-2badec815ad8.html](https://www.winnipeg.sun.com/sports/we-cant-go-back-morrissey-and-the-jets-moving-forward/article_d98197de-235f-4b21-881f-2badec815ad8.html)

### ***'We can't go back': Morrissey and the Jets moving forward***

By Gordon Anderson

Progress up the standings has been glacially slow, but the Winnipeg Jets at least kept some good vibes going on their season-long, eight-game home stand.

The Jets were 11 points out of a playoff spot when they returned from the Olympic break on Feb. 25. A win that night cut the deficit to nine points.

It was up to 10 points when they settled in for eight straight in downtown Winnipeg.

Going into the home stand's finale against Nashville on Tuesday, the climb was down to five steps.

"We've believed in this room that this season and a lot of parts of this season don't reflect the kind of group we have," defenceman Josh Morrissey said prior to Tuesday's faceoff.

"Unfortunately, we can't go back. But coming out of the break, there's no quit in this team. There's a lot of pride here. There are also recent memories of a team that knows how to win a lot of hockey games in all kinds of ways."

The Jets went 5-2 in their first seven home games, with Seattle in the final wildcard spot and hosting Tampa Bay on Tuesday night.

Directly ahead of Winnipeg was Nashville, just one point better and also going through a season far below expectations.

The Jets had earned at least one point in eight of their previous 10 games.

They followed up troubling losses to Anaheim and the New York Rangers last week with wins over Colorado and St. Louis on the weekend.

And while the odds are stacked heavily against them, their determination will not please some of the louder voices in Jets nation who want them to tank to get a higher draft pick.

Chances are, though, none of the players care about a top-five pick in June.

“Whether it’s individual pride or pride in our group... there’s no quit,” Morrissey said. “The Olympic break came at a good time and allowed us to reset. We’ve got to keep going, we’ve got to keep pushing, as you never know what can happen. So we’re never going to stop competing and pushing and trying to get back into that playoff spot.”

The analytics site Money Puck currently lists the Jets’ playoff odds at 5.6%. A regulation win over the Preds, and the odds would have increased to 7.78%. An overtime or shootout win increases the odds to 7.21%.

On the other hand, a regulation loss to Nashville would have seen those odds plummet to 2.58%. An overtime or shootout loss, and they fall to 4.44%.

Return of a familiar face Neal Pionk rejoined the team for practice on Tuesday. The 30-year-old Omaha, Neb., native was hurt during the seven-day practice window prior to the restart of the NHL season.

The team did not reveal specifically what the injury was, only that it was lower-body in nature.

“That was the first (practice for him),” head coach Scott Arniel said. “He’s coming on the road trip. He’ll be getting in contact here. That’s the next step for him. He is getting close.”

Following Tuesday’s game against Nashville, the Jets embark on a three-game road trip against the Boston Bruins, Pittsburgh Penguins and New York Rangers, beginning Thursday night in Boston.

“I’m not making any promises on the road trip, but he’s coming on the trip to get into contact,” Arniel said.

Pionk’s last game was Jan. 13 against the New York Islanders. He logged 20:21 of ice time in that game.