

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/2022/10/03/big-bad-brad-has-speed-to-kill>

Big Bad Brad has speed to kill

'Everyday is a new opportunity,' says Jets Lambert in midst of impressive pre-season

By: Mike McIntyre

Speed kills. And there's no question Brad Lambert has the wheels you need to play the highest level of hockey. He's already elite in that category.

How quickly the 18-year-old Finnish prospect can pick up all the other facets of the NHL game will ultimately determine whether he sticks around with the Winnipeg Jets beyond what's been an impressive first training camp.

"He hasn't played his way out of here yet. I love working with kids and this kid has got a few more days to develop and to see where it goes," a clearly intrigued coach Rick Bowness said following Monday's practice at Bell MTS Iceplex.

"What he does, we can't teach. You can't teach what that kid does with speed. It's unreal how fast he is. We'll teach him how to play the game and understand the game a little better. That will be our job, but some of the things he does, that's just natural and it's beautiful to watch when he gets going."

Lambert has opened plenty of eyes, and maybe dropped a few jaws, in the two pre-season games in which he's appeared so far. He followed up last Thursday's one goal, one assist debut in Montreal with another strong outing Saturday against Edmonton. A highlight-reel assist was wiped off on an offside challenge, and his three overtime shifts were worth the price of admission.

"First of all, you've got to be able to keep up to the pace and he can keep up to pace, he's a NHL skater. The pace, the speed of the game won't be an issue," said Bowness.

"The timing mentally, as you're making plays out there, you're not going to have as much time. That's the adjustment that he'll have to make and the intensity of the one-on-one battles goes way up. Those are the adjustments that, if he's here opening night, and again, let's not get way ahead of ourselves here — let's keep those things in mind."

Lambert will get a third straight look Wednesday when the Jets host the Calgary Flames at Canada Life Centre. The 30th-overall pick in last summer's draft was on a line at Monday's practice with Dominic Toninato (likely a placeholder for Pierre-Luc Dubois, who sat out with a minor injury) and 20-year-old Cole Perfetti.

"Honestly I didn't know how it was going to go," Lambert said Monday of his expectations. "I just came in here. Every day is a new opportunity. Trying to do everything I can to take advantage of every opportunity I get. Just work hard every day and learn every day."

Lambert was sidelined by injury for much of the first week of training camp but hasn't looked out of place at all since joining the main group.

"Obviously it's a faster pace than I've played at before," Lambert said of what he's noticed so far. "Everyone's going hard all the time. You really gotta skate, especially in our system. You gotta skate a lot, forecheck constantly. You can't go too long of shift, you try to keep yourself fresh so you can forecheck, backcheck as hard as you can."

Jets star centre Mark Scheifele made a huge splash in his first training camp in 2011, leading the team in pre-season scoring as an 18-year-old. That earned him a starting role once the regular-season began, but it ended up being just seven games before he was sent back to Barrie of the Ontario Hockey League.

"I was like, 'Wow, this isn't that bad. I can play in this league.' And then I played my first regular-season game and it was not the same animal," said Scheifele. "That is something you definitely have to caution on. The pre-season is a different animal than the regular season. But at the time, I was kind of high on life and then the first couple of games brought me down to earth."

In other words, it's important to proceed with caution when dealing with young players.

Winnipeg has just 25 skaters left on the active roster — Kristian Reichel was sent to the Manitoba Moose on Monday, and Kevin Stenlund will join him provided he clears waivers. That means there are just four expected cuts to come. Lambert is one of 15 remaining forwards (Winnipeg will likely keep 13 around), while two of the remaining 10 defencemen will be cut.

A couple years ago, Lambert was being touted as a potential top three NHL draft pick. But a couple tough years playing in the top men's league in Finland against older, bigger stronger opponents caused his stock to fall. In that sense, he's already battle-tested in a way that a typical junior hockey player might not be.

"I said all along it might not be the best thing for the short run in terms of putting up a bunch of numbers, but it will help my overall game in terms of my readiness for the next level to play men's hockey," said Lambert. "Back in Europe it's a really defensive league and you need to be responsible in both ends. I think that helped me quite a bit."

Lambert has yet to sign an entry-level contract with the Jets, although that could happen quickly. The NHL, the AHL and even assigning him to Seattle of the Western Hockey League (which owns his junior rights) are all options.

"I'm just 18 years old. Just going out there every day and doing my best. And just seeing what happens. That's all I can really control," said Lambert, who has earned a couple nicknames from his new Jets teammates, including "Big Bad Brad" from veteran defenceman Nate Schmidt.

"I like it. I didn't think I was that big, but I'll take it," said the 6-1, 175-pounder. "Another one they've come up with here is Lambo, that's what they mostly call me. But I like Big Bad Brad."

Speaking of having fun, Monday's skate began with a scrimmage in which every player had to use the wrong-handed stick, and goaltenders weren't allowed any. As you can imagine, hilarity ensued.

"You've got to have a little fun, it's training camp. We'll do that quite a few times during the season. It's still a game and it's a long training camp," said Bowness. He singled out Nikolaj Ehlers for being "unreal as a righty."

"He threw a couple of right-handed saucers and it shocked me. I can't make those on my natural hand," said Bowness.

Lambert, a righty, said he won't be switching sides anytime soon.

"I don't think I did very well with the puck. Mostly trying to work on my two way game out there," he joked. "It was tough."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2022/10/03/same-name-different-game>

Same name, different game

Ben Hawerchuk brings famous family moniker to tryout with Manitoba Moose

By: Mike McIntyre

He proudly carries treasured memories of his late, great father in his heart. And now he's brought the legendary family name back to a Winnipeg hockey rink for the first time in more than three decades.

A strange sight indeed. But a comforting one, as Ben Hawerchuk took his first laps on Monday at Bell MTS Iceplex as Manitoba Moose training camp began. The 24-year-old forward is here on a professional tryout, hoping to earn a spot on the American Hockey League club.

"It's a good opportunity for me, personally, and to be back in Winnipeg where dad has so much history here," Hawerchuk said, following an hour-long skate. "Same with my family, my mom (Crystal) is from here and she has family here. It's nice to be here, it's kind of like a second home to me. It's nice to be home and I'm just going to try and make the most of this opportunity."

Unlike his famous father, Dale, who was selected first overall in the 1981 NHL Draft by the Winnipeg Jets and went on to have a Hall of Fame career, Ben Hawerchuk's professional hockey path hasn't been as smooth.

The 5-11, 198-pounder from King City, Ont., went undrafted, spending five years playing for the Barrie Colts of the Ontario Hockey League. (290 games, 67 goals, 69 assists, 136 points, 344 penalty minutes). Dale, of course, was his coach. He remained in that role until he died of stomach cancer in August 2020.

"It was definitely a special five years. Barrie, we kind of grew up near Barrie, too, so playing close to home, I know a lot of people there," said Hawerchuk. "Having my dad there, too, was nice, especially because he's not around anymore. That was a really good memory I have of me and him."

After aging out of junior, Hawerchuk split the 2019-20 season with the University of New Brunswick (eight points in 13 games) and the Brampton Beast of the ECHL (three points in 14 games). He then spent last year with the Jacksonville Icemen of the ECHL, with 18 goals, 17 assists and 117 penalty minutes in 65 games.

"The (ECHL) is definitely a different league than the AHL, but we had some good staff down there that really put me in some good positions to put some numbers up and play a defensive role, a penalty-killing role. That's what I'm going to try and bring to the table here," said Hawerchuk.

"Definitely a little feisty," he said. "I like to go into the corners and I'm not afraid to drop the gloves once in a while, but I have a good shot as well so I can put the puck in the net sometimes, too."

Hawerchuk originally signed this year with a pro team in Italy, recording a goal and four assists in five games, before getting an invitation from Jets assistant general manager Craig Heisinger last month to Moose camp.

"I didn't want to miss an opportunity like this. I would be regretting it for the rest of my life if I didn't try," said Hawerchuk.

He knows some will suspect his last name is what got his foot in the door, but Moose head coach Mark Morrison said Monday that's certainly not the case.

"Absolutely 100 per cent not. This kid competes. And that's what we're trying to do here. We're trying to compete hard all the time, compete for jobs," said Morrison. "All the information I've got, and we're going to watch him in exhibition for sure, is that he plays a little bit different game than his dad did. He's a mucker, grinder on the puck, comes out of the corners with the puck. We'll see."

Hawerchuk conceded there's likely more of a spotlight that naturally comes with the territory.

"Maybe some guys might think I didn't earn the opportunity. I definitely think I've earned it. I don't think they give out tryouts just like that anymore," said Hawerchuk. "It's definitely a little pressure, but it's good. I can handle it."

His family is close with Jets star Mark Scheifele, who also played for Dale in Barrie prior to being drafted in the first round by the Jets in 2011. Hawerchuk said he got a chuckle when he was assigned Scheifele's No. 55 for Moose camp.

Hawerchuk knows how much Winnipeg meant to his father, and how the feeling was very much mutual. He saw it first-hand on Saturday afternoon at an emotional public ceremony to honour Dale and unveil a statue of him at True North Square across from Canada Life Centre.

"It was crazy, with all the Hawerchuk jerseys. I'd never really seen that, because my dad retired when I was born. Just seeing that, it felt like he was playing still," said Hawerchuk. "The statue is pretty spot on. It's kind of crazy. The colours on it. It's a beautiful statue. My family and I are honoured."

Now, Hawerchuk is embracing this latest chapter in his family's special relationship with Winnipeg, with the ultimate dream of one day making it to the NHL still in the back of his mind.

"That's always the goal. You never want to throw that out the window," he said. "Just one day at a time, come to the rink and chuck away."

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/should-he-stay-or-should-he-go-lamberts-fate-in-his-own-hands>

Should he stay or should he go? Lambert's fate in his own hands

By Scott Billeck

Rick Bowness likes to say a player plays their way out of a roster spot, and that the decision of whether they stay or go rests with them and them alone.

It's an interesting re-work of the old mantra of playing your way onto a roster. On one hand, both are fairly analogous. On the other, it appears to give the player a larger piece of the pie with which to work.

Either way, 18-year-old Finnish forward Brad Lambert is still around. In Bowness's eyes, he hasn't worked his way off the squad with roughly a handful of days left in training camp.

It's something that becomes apparent when you step inside Winnipeg's dressing room at their practice facility at BellMTS Iceplex.

There, "Big Bad Brad" or "Lambo," as he's affectionately known to his teammates, owns a makeshift locker stall to the right of the team's whiteboard. There's a black plastic chair to sit on and a metal contraption with a couple of shelves to place his gear behind him.

It's almost as if it had to be thrown together hastily — unexpectedly. But Lambert just won't leave. And just as well, the Jets are happy to have him.

"Honestly, I didn't know how it was going to go. I just came in here. Every day is a new opportunity," Lambert said Monday as the Jets began the last week of their pre-season schedule. "Trying to do everything I can to take advantage of every opportunity I get. Just work hard every day and learn every day."

And stack highlight reel tape, as he did in Winnipeg's 3-2 shootout loss to the Edmonton Oilers on Saturday night.

There, in overtime, Lambert stormed the Oilers zone, circling back as he approached the top of the right circle only to drive to the net past one, and then a second Edmonton player, before narrowly missing a would-be stunning OT winner.

Still, the skill that drips from the kid's silky smooth mitts is hard to miss. The almost roof-raiser was just one of many moments of brilliance Lambert has compiled in his short time in camp (remember: he missed the first few days due to a minor injury)

"What he does, we can't teach," Bowness said. "You can't teach what that kid does with speed. It's unreal how fast he is."

High praise for the 30th overall pick back in July. High praise, indeed.

But pump the brakes a little on the runaway hype train, which Lambert (and his growing fanbase) has been fueling with kerosene these days.

“Well, first of all, he’s not signed so that’s the start,” Bowness said with a chuckle. “Listen, that decision will be made over the next little while, in terms of where he starts and where he plays. He hasn’t played his way out of here yet. I love working with kids and this kid has got a few more days to develop and to see where it goes.”

It’s not all razzle-dazzle, essentially.

And exhibition hockey isn’t the same beast as the one that shows up for Game 1 of an 82-game slate.

“Can he adjust?” Bowness said. “It’s two speeds faster once (the season opener on Oct. 14) hits or when the league starts. First of all, you’ve got to be able to keep up to the pace and he can keep up to pace, he’s an NHL skater. The pace, the speed of the game won’t be an issue.

“The timing mentally, as you’re making plays out there, you’re not going to have as much time. That’s the adjustment that he’ll have to make and the intensity of the one-on-one battles goes way up. Those are the adjustments that, if he’s here opening night, and again, let’s not get way ahead of ourselves here – let’s keep those things in mind. For any young player — and it’s not just Brad — when that puck drops opening night, the intensity goes way up and the speed goes way up.

“Does he have the legs to skate at that level? Absolutely. Any young player has to learn about (dealing with) the intensity and they have to make decisions quicker. You just don’t have, no matter how fast you are – you just don’t have that much time as he’s getting now, or any young player. We’ll see what comes (of it).”

The good money, still, is that Lambert plays most of the season in the American Hockey League with the Manitoba Moose. The option to send him to the Western Hockey League is also there, but the point of that becomes less clear by the day.

He’s seemingly brushed off last season’s misfortunes, ones that ultimately saw him fall down the draft board in Montreal.

If he keeps this up, he’s likely to get a nine-game stint, assuming the contract stuff gets sorted out, to really test his NHL mettle.

But who knows at this point?

As Bowness said Monday, Lambert already possesses great natural hockey instincts.

“He’s picked things up (away from the puck), if you’re watching some of his angles in the neutral zone and angling guys where we want them to go,” Bowness said. “He’s picked that up pretty well. So, the defensive side of the game every young player has to learn how to play without the puck, how to play as a five-man unit without the puck – and where he’s supposed to be. He’s picking that up.”

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/snapshots-hawerchuk-looking-to-make-mark-with-moose-gauntlet-thrown>

SNAPSHOTS: Hawerchuk looking to make mark with Moose; gauntlet thrown

By Scott Billeck

Ben Hawerchuk was in Italy when the phone rang.

It was Manitoba Moose (and Winnipeg Jets assistant) general manager Craig Heisinger. Hawerchuk, the son of legendary Jets forward Dale, was preparing to spend the season with HC Meran/Merano in the Alps Hockey League.

Heisinger had another idea, however, convincing the 24-year-old winger to come back across the pond on a professional tryout contract with the Moose.

"I didn't want to miss an opportunity like this," Hawerchuk said Monday from BellMTS Iceplex as the Moose kicked off their training camp. "I would be regretting it for the rest of my life if I didn't try."

Hawerchuk, a feisty player with a penchant to drop the gloves, is coming to the Moose off of a solid season in the ECHL, where he scored 18 goals and amassed 35 points and 117 penalty minutes in 65 games with the Jacksonville Icemen.

"This kid competes," Moose head coach Mark Morrison said. "That's what we're trying to do here. We're trying to compete hard all of the time. Compete for jobs. That's why he's here. He's going to compete for a job."

Hawerchuk played in Sweden during the 2020-21 campaign and split parts of the 2019-20 season in the ECHL and in USports at the University of New Brunswick.

"It's a good opportunity for me, personally, and to be back in Winnipeg and my dad has so much history here and same with my family, my mom is from here and she has family here," Hawerchuk said. "It's nice to be here, it's kind of like a second home to me. It's nice to be home and I'm just going to try and make the most of this opportunity."

Hawerchuk played five seasons with the Barrie Colts under the tutelage of his father, wearing an "A" during his fourth and fifth years. His final season, in 2018-19, was also the last that Dale would coach the Colts.

The elder Hawerchuk took a leave of absence from the club after being diagnosed with stomach cancer. He passed away in August 2020.

"It was definitely a special five years," Hawerchuk said. "Barrie, we kind of grew up near Barrie, too, so playing close to home, I know a lot of people there. Having my dad there, too, was nice, especially because he's not around anymore. That was a really good memory I have of me and him."

Saturday's statue unveiling ceremony at True North Square was another special moment.

"Just all the fans there the other day, it was crazy, with all the Hawerchuk jerseys on," Hawerchuk said. "I'd never really seen that, because my dad retired when I was born. Just seeing that, it felt like he was playing still."

"The statue is pretty spot-on. It's kind of crazy. The colours on it. It's a beautiful statue. My family and I are honoured."

Hawerchuk is wearing No. 55 in training camp with the Moose.

"(Mark) Scheifele actually mentioned it to me the other day, said, 'I heard you're wearing 55 at camp.' And I said, 'No way,'" Hawerchuk said.

Scheifele spoke at Dale's statue unveiling on Saturday, having been swayed by the late Hall of Famer to turn down a commitment to Cornell University to join the Colts.

Scheifele played three seasons for Barrie before turning pro, and credits much of his development as a hockey player to Dale.

Now another Hawerchuk is trying to carve his own path to the NHL.

"That's always the goal," he said. "You never want to throw that out the window. Just one day at a time, come to the rink and chuck away."

Gauntlet thrown

For much of Winnipeg's remaining 27-man roster in training camp, the final two games are a means to an end.

For some, however, including a trio of defencemen still vying for a roster spot, it's how many chances they have left to make the impression they need.

"Players play their way out of here. They make that decision for us. These next couple of games, they will make that decision for us," Jets head coach Rick Bowness said. "They're either going to play their way on, or they are going to play their way off by showing us they are not ready. Two games to go and guys are obviously running out of time. Every shift, for the guys that are on the bubble, every shift is important at this point."

No pressure.

Switch up

The Jets began Monday's practice in a little unfamiliar territory.

Each player had a stick with the curve opposite to what they'd normally use and goalies had none at all.

"You've got to have a little fun, it's training camp," Bowness said. "We'll do that quite a few times during the season. It's still a game and it's a long training camp. It's a game and you've got to have some fun with it."

Some were pretty adept at switch-hitting.

"Ehlers was unreal as a righty," Bowness said. "He threw a couple of right-handed saucers and it shocked me. I can't make those on my natural hand. They're more athletic than I am."

Dylan Samberg was a fine at the ambidextrous stuff as well.

Scheifele? Not so much.

"I don't think I had my hands for the next 20 minutes of practice," he said. "I don't know if I'm a fan of that one. Maybe we could put that one in the vault for another day."

Cuts and things

Kristian Reichel was the latest causality of Winnipeg's roster trimmings on Monday, while Kevin Stenlund was placed on waivers.

Reichel will report to the Moose, as will Stenlund, assuming he clears on Tuesday.

The Jets are now down to 15 forwards, 10 defencemen and two goalies (three if you include Mikhail Berdin, who is on leave from the club).


Meanwhile, Pierre-Luc Dubois and Jansen Harkins missed Monday's practice due to maintenance. Both are expected back on Tuesday.

Global Winnipeg

https://globalnews.ca/news/9171641/cole-perfetti-winnipeg-jets/?utm_medium=Twitter&utm_source=%40globalwinnipeg

ANALYSIS: Cole Perfetti leaves nothing to chance with Jets

By Kelly Moore Global News

ANALYSIS: Cole Perfetti leaves nothing to chance with Jets -  Cole Perfetti continued what has been a very impressive training camp and preseason to date, with a first star performance in Saturday's 3-2 shootout loss to Edmonton.

Just as or maybe even more important, the 20-year-old forward is not taking any of his success for granted.

There are some young players, coming off a two-goal, eight-shot effort — albeit in an exhibition game — who might fall victim to experiencing a false sense of job security.

Thankfully for the Winnipeg Jets and their fans, Cole Perfetti doesn't show any signs of fitting that character profile.

Perfetti's mindset, right from the start of training camp, has been to keep getting better every day. Suffice to say, he is succeeding at moving the needle forward.

But while the Jets' 2020 first round pick would seem to be a lock to retain his spot as a top-six forward who is looking right at home on a line with Pierre-Luc Dubois and Blake Wheeler, Perfetti says that in his mind, he still has to make the team.

Head coach Rick Bowness doesn't mind that approach at all, saying it matches the message he delivered earlier in camp: that some players would be mistaken on their part to think they had a roster spot sewn up.

But Bowness also recognizes that Perfetti is a special talent and has encouraged the young forward not to overthink the process.

The veteran bench boss says he had a chat with Perfetti during Sunday's practice, and reminded him not to worry too much about the details of the game without the puck — that's something the coaching staff will be happy to teach.

Bowness says when Perfetti has the puck, "you do your thing" was the main piece of advice given.

Perfetti would be wise to continue erring on the side of caution, and to leave nothing to chance in his quest to play an even more prominent role for this hockey club in the coming season.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/video/sawyer-jets-are-out-to-solve-issues-they-ve-needed-to-address-for-years~2533574>

Sawyer: Jets are out to solve issues they've needed to address for years (VIDEO)

After failing to make the playoffs last year, will a new coach and a leadership shakeup be enough to turn things around in Winnipeg? That's Hockey welcomes in the Jets broadcast team of Dan Robertson and Kevin Sawyer to discuss the upcoming season.

The Athletic

<https://theathletic.com/3647839/2022/10/03/winnipeg-jets-lineup-projection-2022/>

Projecting the Winnipeg Jets' opening-night lineup: Dressed, scratched or on the bubble?

By Murat Ates

Rick Bowness said last week that players make the most difficult decisions for him. They either play their way onto a roster or they play their way off.

Winnipeg's battle for jobs on defence has been an open combination between 25-year-old veterans Kyle Capobianco and Johnathan Kovacevic and their younger counterparts: Logan Stanley, Ville Heinola and Dylan Samberg. Whereas it seemed at the onset of camp that a young player like Samberg or Heinola was set to seize a job and never let it go, the youngsters have mixed moments of uncertainty in with moments of much finer play. The Jets have two preseason games left and to hear Bowness speak to reporters at BellMTS IcePlex on Monday, it sounds as though the youth had better make a great impression Wednesday night against Calgary.

"On Friday night, we're going to be pretty close to our starting lineup," Bowness told reporters Monday. "We've got to move some bodies out."

He was responding to a question about Winnipeg's latest round of cuts: Kristian Reichel was assigned to the Moose, while Kevin Stenlund was put on waivers to be assigned to the Moose as well. The Jets had already announced 16 cuts on Saturday:

One name absent from that list? Brad Lambert, who has forced his way into a very real conversation for a roster spot at just 18 despite having so many players ahead of him.

Whereas Heinola, Stanley and Samberg are still battling to prove they deserve the wide-open sixth job on defence, Lambert is making a case to win a job opening that might not even exist. The Jets' forwards were supposed to be set — a top six of Kyle Connor, Mark Scheifele, Nikolaj Ehlers, Pierre-Luc Dubois, Cole Perfetti and Blake Wheeler were supposed to be supplemented by Jansen Harkins, Adam Lowry and Mason Appleton as a checking line and a trio of depth forwards to fill out the roster.

Then Lambert scored against Montreal, set up a goal against Montreal, set up a beautiful (albeit disallowed) goal against Edmonton and was one of Winnipeg's most dangerous players against Edmonton on Saturday night. A superlative performance by Perfetti was the only reason Lambert was not anointed the game's first star.

Will the unsigned Finnish speedster blast his way through a door that wasn't even supposed to be open? And how will Winnipeg handle its overcrowded defence corps?

Today, we project Winnipeg's roster for opening night.

Forwards

Roster locks: Kyle Connor, Pierre-Luc Dubois, Mark Scheifele, Nikolaj Ehlers, Blake Wheeler, Cole Perfetti, Adam Lowry, Mason Appleton, Sam Gagner, Jansen Harkins

Vying: David Gustafsson, Dominic Toninato, Morgan Barron, Saku Maenalanen, Brad Lambert

Biggest camp battles: Harkins vs. Maenalanen vs. Barron, Lambert's wizardry vs. a wee bit of patience

Harkins finds himself in a difficult position. He started training camp as the front-runner for third-line left winger — a coveted position on a team that plans to run Lowry and Appleton against the other team's top lines most nights. Now, thanks to three unspectacular preseason games, Morgan Barron's return to health and the emergence of big Finnish forward Saku Maenalanen, Harkins finds himself with more competition than he did when camp began.

Harkins took a maintenance day Monday, opening the door for Barron to skate alongside Lowry and Appleton. Keep an eye on how Bowness arranges the lines when Harkins returns. The job is presumably Harkins' to lose but Maenalanen has earned a look — and either an NHL job or the right to be Winnipeg's first call-up into the bottom six. Barron is waivers-exempt which could make him a dominant Moose as opposed to an emerging Jets forward but he'll have an opportunity to change that narrative on Wednesday against Calgary.

It's easy to project a fourth line that features 22-year-old David Gustafsson, 33-year-old Sam Gagner, and one of Dominic Toninato and Harkins/Barron/Maenalanen. Given that Winnipeg is expected to keep 13 forwards, this means two of Toninato, Barron, Maenalanen and Lambert are headed to the AHL.

It would be so easy for the Jets to cut Barron and Lambert, neither of whom requires waivers to be sent to the Moose. Barron is only now getting his feet wet at camp and will be in tough to impress his new coaches so much in two preseason games that his roster spot is assured. Winnipeg is not going to waive Harkins, Appleton, Gustafsson or Gagner — nor should they — although they did waive Toninato without consequence while juggling LTIR complexities one year ago.

What to make of all of this? Be prepared for the Jets' bottom six forwards to change as early NHL and AHL performance dictates opportunity. As easy as it would be to send Barron to the Moose, history says it's just as likely that he forces his way back.

Now it's time to talk about the Finnish-Canadian phenom.

The 18-year-old Lambert has done more with less opportunity than many of the men who will win NHL jobs ahead of him. His goal against Montreal was sheer opportunism — a warm “thank you” for the Canadiens' giveaway and a perfect wrist shot to finish the play. His assist to Evan Polei was a similar combination of good fortune and skill.

But Lambert was pure joy to watch throughout Saturday's game against Edmonton, dancing his way through the Oilers' AHL-heavy roster a few times, including this highlight in overtime.

Lambert connected with Perfetti multiple times on the power play, including a gorgeous tic-tac-toe play that led to a disallowed goal for Dubois. He took three overtime shifts, earned praise from Bowness for his poise with the puck, and is still with the Jets even after Chaz Lucius was sent down to the Moose.

“You can't teach what that kid does with speed,” Bowness told reporters on Monday. “It's unreal how fast he is. We'll teach him how to play the game, understand the game a little bit better. That will be our job but some of the things he does, that's just natural — and it's beautiful to watch when he gets going.”

Could the 18-year-old, unsigned Lambert actually win a job? He'd have to be spectacular all over again against an NHL-ready Calgary roster this week. Even then, it seems unlikely that Winnipeg would waive a second NHL veteran to make room for a player slated to star for the Moose. I'm not sure that Lambert needs confidence — to me, he's brimming with it — but I think Manitoba is an ideal spot for him to process the ups and downs that come with being a go-to offensive player.

If he goes to the AHL, scores well and handles those ups and downs, Lambert could become a viable call-up in the case of injuries to Winnipeg's top six. Either way, he needs to sign an entry-level contract to get his season underway.

“He hasn't played his way out of here yet and I love working with kids,” Bowness told reporters at BellMTS IcePlex on Monday. “So let's give that a few more days to develop and see where that goes.”

It's clear that Lambert's stock has risen. I think he's made Winnipeg's decision as difficult as it possibly could have been and deserves every minute of his continued stay at camp.

But I think he's headed to the Moose.

Projected forward lines

Connor — Scheifele — Ehlers
Perfetti — Dubois — Wheeler
Harkins — Lowry — Appleton
Maenalanen — Gustafsson — Gagner
Toninato

Defence

Roster locks: Josh Morrissey, Neal Pionk, Brenden Dillon, Nate Schmidt, Dylan DeMelo, Logan Stanley

Vying for spots: Kyle Capobianco, Johnathan Kovacevic, Dylan Samberg, Ville Heinola

Biggest camp battles: Samberg and Heinola vs. themselves; Capobianco and Kovacevic vs. waivers

This is where the biggest battles begin. There is a clear top eight in Winnipeg's pecking order, led by veterans Josh Morrissey, Dylan DeMelo, Neal Pionk, Brenden Dillon and Nate Schmidt. Logan Stanley, Ville Heinola and Dylan Samberg have had camps of varying quality but represent the next generation knocking on Winnipeg's door.

Then there's Kyle Capobianco and Johnathan Kovacevic, each 25, who could find themselves on waivers or become Winnipeg's seventh and eighth defencemen if the Jets send Heinola and Samberg to the Moose. Neither Capobianco nor Kovacevic has seized a job outright but there's only one top-six job left. Winnipeg isn't going to keep Heinola and Samberg with the team just to sit them in the press box and, although Heinola took a big step forward on Saturday, the growing pains are still evident.

"Players play their way out of here. They make that decision for us," Bowness told reporters at BellMTS IcePlex on Monday. "They are either going to play their way on or they are going to play their way off by showing us they're not ready. Two games to go and they're obviously running out of time. For the guys that are on the bubble, every shift is important at this point."

Bowness has been wonderful in terms of his communication. I liked his calm explanation that part of the blame for Heinola's giveaway en route to Tyler Benson's goal belonged to Winnipeg's forwards. They'd turned away from Heinola on the breakout, leaving him nothing to work with, leading to his decision to try to hold on to the puck under pressure. I also liked that Bowness acknowledged that Heinola made a mistake by trying to make the play he did while saying he would learn.

On the surface, it sounds as though Bowness will have patience for young talent. But will it translate to an NHL job? Recent history shows Bowness coaching the defence in Dallas when a 19-year-old Miro Heiskanen made the NHL in 2018 but, as I understand it, Heiskanen's play at Stars camp left nothing in doubt.

It's still possible for Heinola or Samberg to close preseason with performances so good they win themselves a job. But even if the Jets were willing to risk losing Kovacevic and Capobianco to waivers, a healthy roster would leave playing time for only one of Heinola, Samberg and Stanley on any given night.

I think Stanley's job is safe so it's on Heinola or Samberg to play so well this week that Winnipeg is forced to waive somebody (Capobianco, if I'm guessing) to make room. If the kids do earn a job, promoting — and playing — them would be another sign Bowness is willing to make changes from the previous regime.

Projected defence pairs
Morrissey — DeMelo
Dillon — Schmidt
Stanley — Pionk
Capobianco* — Kovacevic

*Most likely to be waived if Heinola or Samberg earn a job

Goaltending

Roster locks: Connor Hellebuyck, David Rittich

Vying for spots: Oskari Salminen, Mikhail Berdin*

Biggest camp battles: Berdin vs. the waiver wire

Mikhail Berdin is away from the team for personal reasons. Bowness didn't share any additional info on Monday but I think it's fair to wonder about Berdin's long-term future in Winnipeg. The NHL jobs will go to Connor Hellebuyck and David Rittich, while Oskari Salminen and Arvid Holm have impressed at camp and would make a great tandem for the Moose.

I'm not sure whether Berdin gets waived or moved in some other fashion. If he does end up on waivers, I'm not sure that somebody would claim him, but remember that he's only 24. Berdin's story is still being written, even if he's not on the cusp of an NHL job.

Projected goaltenders: Hellebuyck, Rittich

Where could this 13 forward, eight defencemen, two goaltender roster be wrong?

- If Heinola or Samberg force their way onto the roster;
- If Winnipeg is more inclined to waive one of Capobianco and Kovacevic to run seven defencemen than I think;
- If the battle for bottom-six jobs still has a surprise or two in store;
- Injuries/illness.

Otherwise, it looks like we're getting very close to the opening night Winnipeg Jets roster. Five players still need to be cut, including Berdin, and the battles for jobs are clearly marked. Capobianco's penalty minutes make him the most likely waivers risk but unless Heinola or Samberg are spectacular this week, we're projecting them to start in the AHL.

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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/training-camp-notebook---october-3/c-336020890>

Training Camp Notebook - October 3

Big Bad Brad, a backhanded scrimmage, and injury updates!

by Mitchell Clinton @MitchellClinton / WinnipegJets.com

WINNIPEG - His performance against Montreal, which included a big game-tying goal in the third period, along with his speed and finesse in overtime against Edmonton on Saturday have earned Brad Lambert the nickname Big Bad Brad.

Sure, it may only be Nate Schmidt that calls him that, but shouts of "Big Bad Brad" around the dressing room have increased over the last few days at Winnipeg Jets practice.

"I didn't think I was that big, but I'll take it," Lambert said with a grin after a 75-minute skate on Monday. "Another one they've come up with here is Lambo, that's what they mostly call me. But I like Big Bad Brad."

And there has been a lot to like about the play of Lambert since he returned from injury late into the first week of training camp.

He had a goal and an assist against the Canadiens in his National Hockey League preseason debut, which came after leading the Jets in scoring at the Young Stars Classic.

While the 30th overall pick in the 2022 NHL Draft didn't get on the scoresheet against Edmonton - though he would have, if not for an offside challenge that took a tic-tac-toe goal off the board - he's happy with how things have gone so far, but he's still keeping things in perspective.

"It's a faster pace than I've played at before. Everyone's going hard all the time," said Lambert, who is also adjusting to North American sized ice surfaces, which are smaller than those in Finland. "You really have to skate, especially in our system. You have to skate a lot, forecheck constantly. You can't go too long of shift, you try to keep yourself fresh so you can forecheck, backcheck as hard as you can."

In fact, Lambert's play brings to mind that of Mark Scheifele in 2011. He was at the top of preseason scoring that fall and got into seven games in the 2011-12 season.

The veteran forward was talking about this very subject with his father, Brad, a couple of days ago.

"We were talking about that time, and I was like, 'Wow, this isn't that bad. I can play in this league.' And then I played my first regular-season game and it was not the same animal," said Scheifele. "But at the time, I was kind of high on life and then the first couple of games brought me down to earth."

It's at this point of the practice update that we pump the figurative brakes. As of Monday, Lambert remains unsigned so obviously that would have to get done if there were any regular season NHL games to be played.

There are many things an 18-year-old also has to learn about the NHL game, but head coach Rick Bowness says that's the job of the coaching staff.

"He hasn't played his way out of here yet. I love working with kids and this kid has got a few more days to develop and to see where it goes," Bowness said. "We'll let him get through the

next game or two and go from there. I don't want him focused on the 14th (of October), I want him focused on what he has to do right now. Those conversations will definitely come."

The Jets have two preseason games remaining on the schedule. Wednesday they're at home against the Calgary Flames before heading to Scotiabank Saddledome for a rematch on Saturday.

"I don't really know if I'll play another game. I'm just taking advantage of every opportunity I get, working as hard as I can in practice and taking it a day at a time," Lambert said. "Just going out there every day and doing my best. And just seeing what happens. That's all I can really control."

IN AND OUT

For the second consecutive day, Pierre-Luc Dubois and Jansen Harkins didn't take part in practice. Bowness expects them on the ice for Tuesday's skate, but didn't anticipate either one would play against the Flames on Wednesday.

Mason Appleton, who left Saturday's game against Edmonton, did return to practice on Monday and was a full participant.

Kristian Reichel was assigned to the Manitoba Moose on Monday, and Kevin Stenlund was placed on waivers for the purpose of being assigned to the Moose as well.

LINE RUSHES

Connor-Scheifele-Ehlers (Wheeler rotating in)
Perfetti-Toninato-Lambert
Barron-Lowry-Appleton
Maenalanen-Gustafsson-Gagner

Morrissey-DeMelo
Dillon-Schmidt
Stanley-Pionk
Samberg-Heinola
Capobianco-Kovacevic

LITTLE BIT OF FUN

Monday's skate began with a bit of fun, as the players split into two teams and scrimmaged - except this was no regular scrimmage.

All skaters had to use the opposite handed stick, while goaltenders Connor Hellebuyck and David Rittich used no sticks.

Laughter was on full display.

"You've got to have a little fun, it's training camp," said Bowness. "We'll do that quite a few times during the season. It's still a game and it's a long training camp. It's a game and you've got to have some fun with it."

Bowness said there were a few players that caught his eye, even on their wrong hand.

"Ehlers was unreal as a righty," said Bowness. "He threw a couple of right-handed saucers and it shocked me. I can't make those on my natural hand. They're more athletic than I am."

Scheifele offered up a couple other scouting reports.

"Samberg was pretty good. I was not," he laughed. "Maybe we could put that one in the vault for another day."